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Report on internal audit and investigation activities for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2014

Summary

The present report provides information on the internal audit and investigation functions carried out for the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2014. The internal audit function for UN-Women is carried out by the UN-Women Audit Unit of the Office of Audit and Investigations of the United Nations Development Programme in accordance with the financial regulations and rules of UN-Women (UNW/2012/6, annex I). The investigation function is carried out by the Office's Investigations Section. Information on the action taken and the management response to the present report are set out in the annex to the report and available on the website of UN-Women. As requested by the Executive Board in its decision 2014/4 (see UNW/2014/6), the report includes information on the number, nature and outcomes of investigation cases conducted during the year. The report of the Audit Advisory Committee of UN-Women and the management response thereto are contained in the addendum to the present report (UNW/2015/4/Add.1).

The Executive Board may wish to take note of the present report, express its continuing support for the audit and investigation functions within UN-Women and take note of the report of the Audit Advisory Committee.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report provides a description of the internal audit and investigation functions in the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the related activities for the year ended 31 December 2014. Information is presented relating to the main results of audits conducted during 2014 and to the status of management efforts to implement the recommendations made in the audit reports for current and prior years. Also presented is information on investigation activities, such as the number of new and continuing cases, the nature of the cases and the outcomes of the investigations conducted. The report of the Audit Advisory Committee of UN-Women and the management response thereto are contained in the addendum to the present report (UNW/2015/4/Add.1).

II. Assurance

2. To provide assurance with regard to governance, risk management and control systems, audits conducted by the UN-Women Audit Unit continue to be focused on those areas of governance, management and operations assessed as posing a high level of financial, reputational, legal and functional risk to UN-Women and to the achievement of its goals.

A. Mandate

3. In March 2012, a dedicated UN-Women audit unit was created within the Office of Audit and Investigations of the United Nations Development Programme as a result of a biennial service-level agreement between the Office and UN-Women. The Unit carries out the internal audit function for UN-Women in accordance with the Entity's financial regulations and rules (UNW/2012/6, annex I). For the biennium 2014-2015, the Unit continued to provide internal audit services and the Office continued to provide reimbursable investigation services pursuant to a second service-level agreement, signed on 6 December 2013.

4. In addition, the Office confirms that in 2014 it continued to be operationally independent of the management of UN-Women and exercised freedom in determining the scope of its audits and investigations in accordance with international and generally accepted standards.

5. The Office confirms to the Executive Board that audits are performed in accordance with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing and the Code of Ethics established by the Institute of Internal Auditors. In accordance with those standards, the work of the Unit is subject to review by the Quality Assurance and Policy Unit of the Office. Post-audit client surveys are conducted at the conclusion of each audit mission. The surveys received in relation to audits conducted in 2014 indicated overall satisfaction with the UN-Women Audit Unit and the work performed.

B. Independent external oversight

6. The Audit Advisory Committee continued to provide advice to the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director to promote and support the accountability framework, good governance and the effectiveness of the internal audit and investigation functions of UN-Women. In 2014, the Committee reviewed the annual workplan for the UN-Women Audit Unit for 2014 and monitored its implementation through quarterly progress reports and private meetings with the Director of the Office and the Chief of the Unit. In addition, the Committee reviewed and provided comments on the draft report for 2013 (UNW/2014/4).

7. The UN-Women Audit Unit communicated its annual workplan to the Board of Auditors in an effort to promote coordination and efficiency.

C. Risk-based audit planning

8. The 2014 audit plan was formulated taking into consideration the input of senior management, divisions and other stakeholders and is based upon the risk assessment of the auditable offices or units. In 2014, the UN-Women Audit Unit reviewed country offices and headquarters units that were rated as high-risk and medium-risk.

9. The audit plan was reviewed by the Audit Advisory Committee in November 2013 before its submission to and approval by the Under-Secretary-General/ Executive Director, in March 2014.

10. All fieldwork for the seven audits included in the 2014 plan was completed in 2014 as planned. Four of the seven audit reports were issued in 2014 and the remainder in January and February 2015.

D. Audit reports issued

11. Audit reports for four field-based offices and four headquarters units were issued in 2014. Of those eight reports, four were related to fieldwork performed in 2014 and four to fieldwork performed in 2013.

12. The audit reports issued for field-based offices were for the office in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (report No. 1226), the country office in Pakistan (report No. 1304), the multi-country office in Fiji (report No. 1305) and the office in Mali (report No. 1306). The reports issued for headquarters units were for the procurement function (report No. 1223), the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women (report No. 1227), the Fund for Gender Equality (report No. 1228) and the UN-Women training centre in the Dominican Republic (report No. 1230). All the reports are available from http://audit-public-disclosure.unwomen.org.

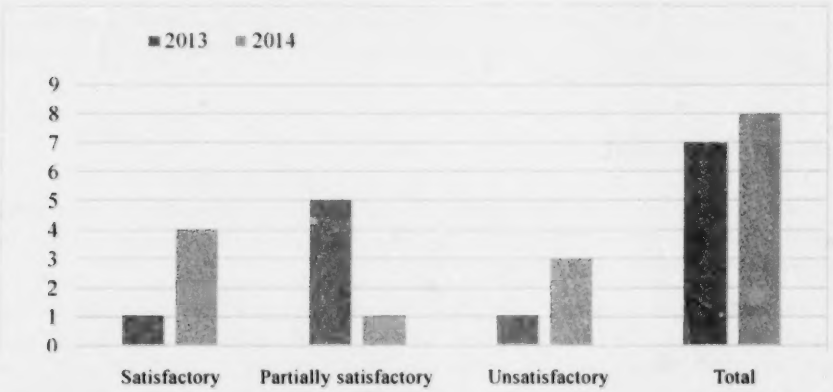
13. The audit reports issued in 2014 generally covered programmatic and operational activities carried out by UN-Women in 2013, meaning that the results generally reflect the status of programmes and operations during that year. Excluding the procurement function audit report to avoid double counting of procurement expenditure, the seven full-scope audits covered the programmatic and operational activities of the UN-Women offices or units and represented combined

expenditure of some $63 million, or 23 per cent of the total expenditure of $264 million reported by the Entity in its financial report for 2013 (A/69/5/Add.12). The audit coverage for 2014 compares favourably to 2013, where it covered 17 per cent of the total expenditure of $235 million. The cross-functional audit of procurement covered expenditure of some $120 million, or 45 per cent of the total expenditure reported by UN-Women for 2013.

E. Audit ratings

14. On the basis of the results of an audit, the Office generally assigns an overall audit rating, relating to its assessment of governance, risk management and control processes. Three offices or units (37.5 per cent) audited were assessed as unsatisfactory, which meant that internal controls, governance and risk management processes either had not been established or were not functioning well and that the achievement of the overall objectives of the audited entity might be seriously compromised. One (12.5 per cent) was assessed as partially satisfactory, meaning that one or several issues that might negatively affect the achievement of its objectives were identified. The remaining four offices or units (50 per cent) were assessed as satisfactory, with no issues that might significantly affect the achievement of their objectives identified. Figure I provides a comparison of the audit ratings.

Figure I
Comparison of audit ratings for 2014 and 2013



III. Disclosure of internal audit reports

15. In accordance with Executive Board decision 2012/10 (see UNW/2012/16) and after ensuring proper due diligence and quality assurance, all internal audit reports were publicly disclosed 30 days after their issuance to management and the Member States concerned. Of the eight reports issued in 2014, one was partially redacted because it contained sensitive information regarding safety and security. No request was received from any organization or Member State for any other redaction of audit reports.

IV. Staffing and budget

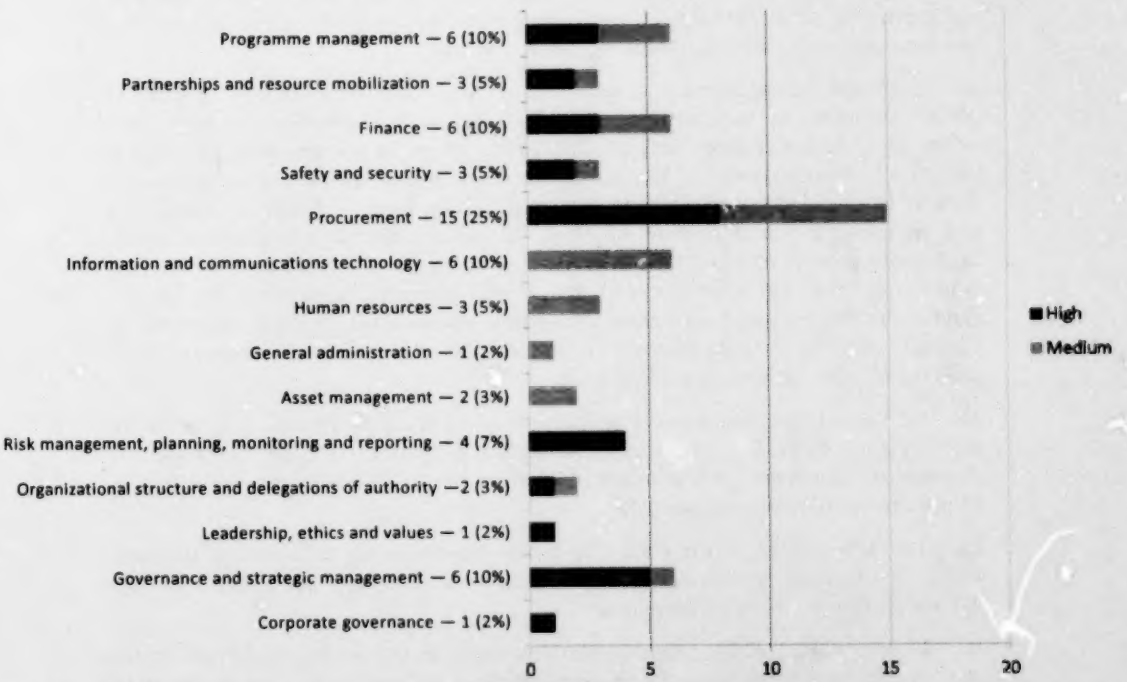
16. In 2014, all four approved posts in the UN-Women Audit Unit were filled until 17 November, when the holder of a P-4 position of Audit Specialist accepted a lateral move to another post in the Office. The vacated post was filled on 17 January 2015 through a lateral transfer.

17. In 2014, the UN-Women Audit Unit had an overall budget of $1.2 million, representing an increase of some $0.28 million compared with the 2013 budget. The audit and investigations expenditure amounted to $1.1 million, which indicated underspending of the budget by 8 per cent, owing mainly to savings on salaries and benefits and the use of Office in-house personnel instead of consultants in carrying out case investigations.

V. Significant internal audit results

18. The audit reports issued in 2014 resulted in 59 audit recommendations, of which 30 were rated as high-priority and requiring prompt action from management to ensure that UN-Women was not exposed to high risks. Figure II indicates the distribution and prioritization of all recommendations issued in 2014.

Figure II
Distribution and prioritization of audit recommendations[a]


Programme management — 6 (10%)
Partnerships and resource mobilization — 3 (5%)
Finance — 6 (10%)
Safety and security — 3 (5%)
Procurement — 15 (25%)
Information and communications technology — 6 (10%)
Human resources — 3 (5%)
General administration — 1 (2%)
Asset management — 2 (3%)
Risk management, planning, monitoring and reporting — 4 (7%)
Organizational structure and delegations of authority —2 (3%)
Leadership, ethics and values — 1 (2%)
Governance and strategic management — 6 (10%)
Corporate governance — 1 (2%)
0
5
10
15
20
High
Medium

[a] Total number of recommendations: 59.

A. Headquarters audits

19. In 2014, the Office issued four reports relating to audits of headquarters units or functions, namely the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women, the Fund for Gender Equality, the UN-Women training centre and the procurement function.

20. Combined, the four audit reports resulted in 30 recommendations. Three (75 per cent) of the audits (Fund for Gender Equality, UN-Women training centre and procurement function) resulted in findings demonstrating the need for further clarity regarding resource needs, mandate and/or responsibilities for oversight and training. Two audits (UN-Women training centre and procurement function) resulted in findings relating to the insufficiency of the structure and processes for results management, monitoring and reporting.

B. Field office audits

21. In 2014, the Office issued four reports relating to audits of three country offices and the office in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

22. In total, those audits resulted in 29 recommendations, of which 6 (21 per cent) pertained to programme management, 5 (17 per cent) to procurement matters, 4 (14 per cent) to finance, 3 (10 per cent) to partnerships and resource mobilization, 2 (7 per cent) each in four categories (asset management, human resources, information and communications technology and safety and security) and 1 each in the remaining three categories (corporate governance, general administration and risk management, planning, monitoring and reporting).

23. Although management has been responsive to recommendations specific to offices or units, as indicated in section VI below, the UN-Women Audit Unit observed some consistency between the issues raised in the previous two annual reports and those referred to herein. A further analysis of all the recommendations from 2014 revealed the re-emergence of some issues, such as delays in strategizing and initiating the mobilization of funds (2 offices and 2 headquarters units), inadequate project or results monitoring and oversight processes and the lack of monitoring frameworks or plans (1 office and 2 headquarters units), inadequate vendor due diligence and management (3 offices), weaknesses in the management of advances to implementing partners (3 offices) and weaknesses in management of capital and information assets (3 offices).

24. Of special concern was the proportion of field audits in which issues were noted relating to project advances to implementing partners (75 per cent) and the absence or inadequacy of resource mobilization strategies and efforts identified in 50 per cent of all audits conducted.

25. The UN-Women Audit Unit also noted pre-financing of non-core projects, which is expressly prohibited by UN-Women policies and procedures, in two (50 per cent) of the field office audits.

26. In responding to the recommendations made in the audits, management not only should look to address the recommendations as they pertain to the location audited, but also should consider whether the risks identified apply to the broader

organization and could be more effectively mitigated through a more global response, such as a policy or process change or clarification.

27. As at 31 December 2014, 12 of the 59 recommendations made in 2014 had been fully implemented, with 47 still outstanding, of which 13 (28 per cent) pertained to reports issued in the final quarter of 2014. Of the 47 outstanding recommendations, 26 (55 per cent) were rated as high-priority.

VI. Follow-up on audit recommendations

28. The audit reports issued between 1 July 2010 and 31 December 2014 included a total of 236 audit recommendations. As at 31 December 2014, 10 of the recommendations had been withdrawn, given that they were no longer relevant, owing to changes in the organizational structure and operations of UN-Women. Of the remaining 226 recommendations, 169 (75 per cent) had been fully implemented, 38 (17 per cent) were in the process of being implemented, and implementation activities had yet to be initiated for 19 (8 per cent).

29. Of the 38 recommendations in the process of being implemented, 3 or 1 per cent (2 rated high-priority, 1 rated medium-priority) had been outstanding for more than 18 months without being fully implemented. Two of the long-outstanding recommendations were implemented during the first quarter of 2015. The remaining recommendation required UN-Women to develop a corporate policy on risk management to assist field offices in identifying, assessing, monitoring and reporting risks associated with its programmes. As part of the follow-up process, the UN-Women Audit Unit confirmed that implementation was in progress and that UN-Women was working towards the implementation of enterprise risk management.

30. Of the 19 recommendations whose implementation had not yet started as at 31 December 2014, 13 related to audit reports issued in the fourth quarter of 2014. Table 1 indicates the status of implementation of audit recommendations as at 31 December 2014.

Table 1
Status of implementation of audit recommendations as at 31 December 2014

Report issued	*Audit No.*	*Audit report title*	*Report rating*[a]	*Number of recommendations*					*High priority outstanding > 18 months*
				Total	*Implemented*	*In progress*	*Not implemented*	*Withdrawn*	
September 2010	719	UNIFEM Pacific subregional office	Unsatisfactory	23	22	–	–	1	–
December 2010	743	UNIFEM Arab States subregional office	Satisfactory	9	9	–	–	–	–
December 2010	753	UNIFEM Southern Africa and Indian Ocean States subregional office	Partially satisfactory	19	19	–	–	–	–
December 2010	774	UNIFEM subregional office for Mexico, Central America, Cuba and the Dominican Republic	Partially satisfactory	16	16	–	–	–	–
May 2011	823	UN-Women subregional office for the Southern Cone	Follow-up	24	16	–	–	8	–
October 2011	827	UN-Women Caribbean subregional office	Partially satisfactory	7	6	–	–	1	–
December 2011	863	UN-Women Central and Eastern Europe subregional office	Satisfactory	9	9	–	–	–	–
11 April 2013	982	UN-Women country office in Afghanistan	Partially satisfactory	9	9	–	–	–	–
28 June 2013	1077	UN-Women East and Horn of Africa subregional office in Kenya	Partially satisfactory	16	13	3	–	–	2
7 June 2013	1121	UN-Women subregional office in India	Partially satisfactory	9	9	–	–	–	–
29 October 2013	1220	UN-Women country office in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Unsatisfactory	13	9	4	–	–	–
31 October 2013	1221	UN-Women country office in South Sudan	Partially satisfactory	10	9	1	–	–	–
1 November 2013	1222	UN-Women country office in Colombia	Satisfactory	5	5		–	–	–
18 December 2013	1224	UN-Women country office in Haiti	Partially satisfactory	8	6	2	–	–	–
13 February 2014	1223	Procurement function	Unsatisfactory	12	5	7	–	–	–
25 February 2014	1226	UN-Women Office in the Occupied Palestinian Territories	Satisfactory	1	–	1	–	–	–
17 March 2014	1227	United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women	Satisfactory	2	–	2	–	–	–
17 March 2014	1228	Fund for Gender Equality	Satisfactory	5	3	2	–	–	–
6 June 2014	1230	UN-Women training centre in the Dominican Republic	Unsatisfactory	11	–	8	3	–	–

Report issued	*Audit No.*	*Audit report title*	*Report rating*[a]	*Number of recommendations*					*High priority outstanding > 18 months*
				Total	*Implemented*	*In progress*	*Not implemented*	*Withdrawn*	
17 July 2014	1304	UN-Women country office in Pakistan	Partially satisfactory	10	–	7	3	–	–
8 December 2014	1305	UN-Women multi-country office in Fiji	Satisfactory	5	4	1		–	–
28 November 2014	1306	UN-Women office in Mali	Unsatisfactory	13	–		13	–	–
Total			–	**236**	**169**	**38**	**19**	**10**	**2**
Total (percentage)			–	**100**	**72**	**16**	**8**	**4**	**1**

Abbreviation: UNIFEM, United Nations Development Fund for Women.

[a] Follow-up audit reports are not assigned an overall rating.

VII. Advisory services

31. The UN-Women Audit Unit continued to provide, upon request, advice and detailed comments to UN-Women managers at headquarters and field offices. The advice covered a range of topics, including donor requests for information, external assessments, procurement and anti-fraud policies and procedures, proposed terms of reference and draft policies, audit/investigation clauses in donor and non-standard agreements, non-renewal of lease agreements, writing-off of receivables, audits of projects implemented by national Governments or non-governmental organizations, determination of the useful life of assets and reporting against the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women.

VIII. Investigations

32. In accordance with the service-level agreement, the Office provides investigation services covering allegations of fraud, corruption or other wrongdoing, including workplace harassment, the abuse of authority or retaliation against whistle-blowers, by UN-Women staff members, non-staff personnel and contractors.

A. Caseload

33. In 2014, the Office opened 17 new cases. It also carried over nine cases from 2013, bringing the total caseload in 2014 to 26, an increase of 30 per cent over the total caseload in 2013 (20 cases), as shown in table 2.

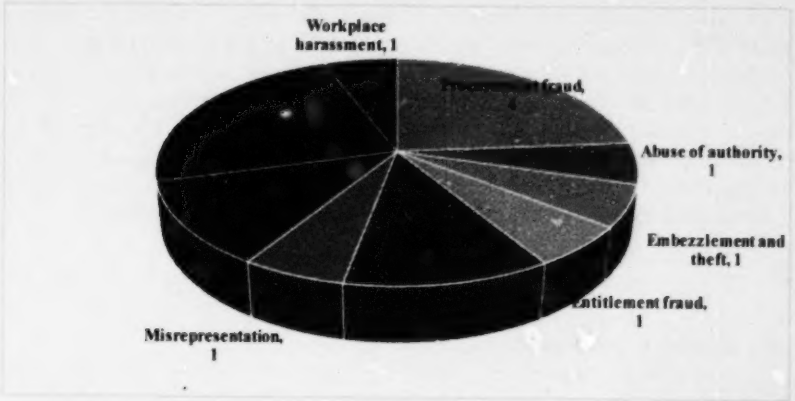
Table 2
Caseload in 2013 and 2014

Caseload	*2013*	*2014*
Carry-over as at 1 January	2	9
Intake during the year	18	17
Total	**20**	**26**
Closed (from cases carried over)	1	5
Closed (from intake)	10	12
Total	**11**	**17**
Carried over as at 31 December	9	9

B. Types of complaint

34. The 17 complaints received during 2014 are detailed in figure III.

Figure III
Case intake by category, 2014



35. Geographically, the 17 cases received in 2014 were from Asia and the Pacific (6), Arab States (4), the Americas and the Caribbean (3), Africa (3) and headquarters (1).

C. Financial implications

36. Of the 17 cases opened, 7 had potential for financial implications, namely procurement fraud, embezzlement and theft and entitlement fraud. Three cases were closed, either because the allegations were not substantiated or because the alleged offender had left UN-Women and the Entity sustained no financial loss in those cases.

37. Four cases relating to financial irregularities remain open from the 2014 intake. Two are currently under investigation and two under assessment. The total amount involved is $129,689.

38. In addition to the carry-over of the four cases opened in 2014, two cases relating to procurement fraud carried over from 2013 remain open, with a total reported financial implication of $735,400.

39. The amounts indicated in paragraphs 37 and 38 were provided when the allegations were reported to the Office. The losses, if any, will be determined upon completion of the investigations.

D. Cases resolved/closed

40. The Office closed 17 cases in 2014, 15 after a preliminary assessment owing to insufficient evidence of wrongdoing to justify an investigation or because an investigation was not warranted and 2 after investigation. Of the latter, one case, relating to misrepresentation, resulted in an investigation report and the other in a closure report.

41. The case that resulted in an investigation report was transmitted to the Division of Management and Administration pursuant to the requirements of the UN-Women Legal Framework for addressing Non-Compliance with United Nations Standards of Conduct. The staff member who was the subject of the investigation was charged with making a material misrepresentation on her personal history form and submitting a falsified document in support of the same, in violation of regulation 1.2 (b) of the Staff Regulations. The staff member received the allegations of misconduct on 4 November 2014 and was requested to respond. On 15 December, however, she tendered her resignation and was subsequently separated from the Entity. She submitted no response to the allegations before separation, meaning that the disciplinary proceedings were not completed.

42. Table 3 sets out the disposition of cases in 2013 and 2014.

Table 3
Disposition of cases in 2013 and 2014

Action taken	*Cases in 2013*	*Cases in 2014*
After preliminary assessment		
Closed (investigation not warranted)	10	15
Subtotal	**10**	**15**
After investigation		
Closed (not substantiated)	1	1
Closed (substantiated)	–	1
Subtotal	**1**	**2**
Total	**11**	**17**
Investigation reports issued	1	2

E. Cases carried forward

43. At the end of 2014, the Office had nine open cases for UN-Women, Five were at the assessment stage and four under investigation.

IX. Conclusion

44. With the resources available to the Office in 2014, it was able effectively to carry out its mandate to provide internal audit and investigation services to UN-Women. The collective results of the audits of headquarters units, the corporate function and country offices indicated that the governance, risk management and internal control systems were generally functioning well. All offices concerned were responsive in implementing audit recommendations.

45. During the year, the Office was able to close more investigation cases and issue more investigation reports than in the previous year.

46. The continuing support of the Executive Board, senior management and the Audit Advisory Committee will enable the Office to continue to provide value-added internal audit and investigation services that will contribute to the achievement of the goals of UN-Women, as defined its strategic plan.

Annex

Management response to the report on internal audit and investigation activities for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2014

1. The United Nations Entity on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) is pleased to present its management response to the report of the Director of the Office of Audit and Investigations of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on internal audit and investigation activities for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2014.

2. UN-Women acknowledges the findings and is addressing the key issues identified in section V of the report, "Significant internal audit results", under the following headings to highlight the improvements being undertaken.

Governance and strategic management

Resource needs, mandate and/or responsibilities for oversight and training

3. The primary issue identified focuses on governance and strategic management and relates to the audit of headquarters units or functions, namely the procurement function, the Fund for Gender Equality, the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women and the UN-Women training centre. UN-Women acknowledges the observation made as to the need for further clarity regarding resource needs, mandate and/or responsibilities for oversight and training and has taken action to address the issue at the corporate level. The Procurement Section reviewed the organizational structure of procurement at headquarters and strengthened its capacity by hiring additional staff. In addition, procurement policies, procedures and tools were revamped and new systems developed, thereby ensuring adequate oversight and management of the function.

4. With regard to the trust funds, a review of project documents of the Fund for Gender Equality was performed and a new project document for 2014-2017 finalized and approved to reflect the approved governance and management structure and sustainability strategy. The United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women has developed a new strategic plan for 2015-2020 to guide its efforts in the coming years in consultation with a range of donors and Member States, current and past grantees, civil society experts and Programme Advisory Committee members. The strategy will be finalized in May 2015. In the area of training, UN-Women intends to develop an interim strategy with regard to data collection methods and training mechanisms, while a full strategy is developed.

Insufficiency of the structure and processes for results management, monitoring and reporting

5. The issue pertaining to the insufficiency of the structure and processes for results management, monitoring and reporting was raised in relation to the audit of the procurement function and the training centre. At the corporate level, the

Procurement Section enhanced the systematic oversight and monitoring of procurement activities by:

(a) Creating more than 30 checklists covering all procurement activities to provide requesters, buyers and approving authorities with a list of mandatory documents, steps and actions;

(b) Developing more than 10 guidance documents to support the procurement processes and use of checklists;

(c) Developing and disseminating training materials (more than 15 webinars and 10 video tutorials, along with five regional training sessions for all buyers in UN-Women);

(d) Creating an online procurement planning platform that ensures consolidated requirements;

(e) Creating a real-time dashboard compiling information on overall spending trends at the global, regional and local levels, down to individual purchase orders;

(f) Revising the Programme and Operations Manual to include adequate oversight and monitoring mechanisms to mitigate risk.

6. UN-Women performed a structural and functional review of the Procurement Section to ensure adequate segregation of duties, monitoring and oversight in the decentralized environment. Activities posing a significant risk were defined. In addition, Atlas reporting queries and tools were developed to generate useful information to help buyers and users with the periodic closure processes, reviews of purchase orders and the review and accrual of Atlas receipts, in addition to monitoring and tracing aggregate amounts for suppliers. The Atlas procurement catalogue has been revised to streamline the modalities for reporting on procurement expenditure. The Section has connected and integrated all internal stakeholders through a procurement community network, which has almost 1,000 members, and cross-functional working groups for updating existing and forthcoming tools, processes and procedures.

7. With regard to the training centre, the centre will, on the basis of the budget templates, prepare separate budgets for each activity and a separate Atlas project code for each course development project to facilitate the tracking of and reporting on course development and delivery. Management plans to develop a facilitated training schedule and budget, as funding permits. In addition, UN-Women will initiate internal consultations to develop a strategy for monitoring progress on each Atlas project.

Risk management

8. UN-Women formally adopted an enterprise risk management policy following its review and approval by the senior management team in November 2014. It will serve as the foundation for the implementation of a risk management approach suitable to UN-Women that is comprehensive in scope and integrated into the existing governance structure, decision-making, activities and processes. The establishment of the policy and related procedures makes risk management explicitly part of the accountability system at UN-Women.

Resource mobilization

9. Resource mobilization is a top organizational priority and UN-Women notes the internal audit observations in that regard. UN-Women updated its resource mobilization strategy in 2014 and, consequently, regional, multi-country and country offices have developed individual resource mobilization strategies and action plans. Those strategies reflect the overarching objectives of the organizational resource mobilization strategy, but are tailored to the unique context of each country or region. In addition, headquarters provided tailored support to field offices through special training sessions, sharing of best practices and targeted information about donor priorities and decision-making process. Consequently, UN-Women significantly increased the mobilization of non-core funds to a historic high of $158 million, mobilized largely at the regional and country levels.

10. UN-Women recognizes the importance of annual resource mobilization plans for the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence Against Women and the Fund for Gender Equality. Both trust funds have developed and implemented fundraising plans for 2014 to secure contributions from bilateral donors and to engage potential donors from other sectors, including the private sector and foundations. Consequently, the Fund for Gender Equality raised $6.6 million in 2014 and added nine new partners to its donor list (two Governments, a private sector partner, a foundation and five national committees). In addition, the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women met its fundraising target of $15 million, with contributions from 10 Governments. It also established three new private sector partnerships in the fashion/arts sector to further expand and diversify its range of donors.

11. UN-Women believes that its financing is a continuing joint responsibility of the Entity and the Executive Board. In that spirit, it is engaging Board members in a structured dialogue on financing at every second regular session of the Board, beginning in 2015, to raise awareness of the funding needs and attract stronger financial commitments.

Programme and project management

12. UN-Women has taken action to strengthen the oversight and monitoring of project advances to implementing partners. It has taken action at several levels to identify problems and implement corrective measures, such as:

(a) Identifying specific challenges experienced with partners and long-outstanding advances and providing dedicated support to recover balances;

(b) Supporting countries by providing country-dedicated training to both staff and partners;

(c) In addition to the regular review through the month-end closure instructions and the country office assessment tool, providing oversight by regional offices of outstanding advances in relation to country offices;

(d) Revising relevant sections of the Programme and Operations Manual to further strengthen partner selection processes, especially with regard to capacity assessments of partners and appropriate payment modalities.

13. UN-Women particularly recognizes the importance of internal controls through strengthened accountability of field offices and oversight of regional offices in this regard. Specific training sessions have also been developed to ensure that implementing partners have a good understanding of the management, monitoring and reporting procedures for resources in order to achieve the intended results. As at 31 December 2014, there had been a reduction in outstanding partner advances of $32.5 million (76 per cent) compared with 31 December 2013.

14. Senior-level meetings will be held to drive action to liquidate advances that have been outstanding for more than six months and to improve compliance with partner management policies.

Vendor due diligence and management

15. Vendors are set up in Atlas in compliance with the vendor checklist. All vendors created in 2014 have already been checked against banned vendor lists. A process has also been established for buyers to sign and stamp each vendor form after verification. Supplementary due diligence will be ensured by verifying vendors' bank accounts. UN-Women will further strengthen due diligence to validate the legal existence of vendors and the financial and technical capacity to perform the activities listed in the terms of reference and ensure that vendors have not been sanctioned by the United Nations system.

Management of capital and information assets

16. UN-Women is continuously reinforcing its controls over the management of assets. As part of its internal control process, it verifies physical assets twice a year to ensure their existence. Those controls are regularly monitored from headquarters through the monthly closure procedures, in line with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards. UN-Women reviewed the asset management chapter of the Programme and Operations Manual and strengthened guidance on delegation of authority in relation to the approval of the addition, disposal and donation processes. UN-Women developed additional guidelines with regard to impairment reviews of assets and the physical verification process.

17. UN-Women conducted additional online and face-to-face training sessions for all country offices to increase capacity and to ensure compliance with the asset management policies and procedures. It also implemented a monthly close and reconciliation process to ensure that any errors identified would be proactively addressed and communicated immediately to the country office concerned for resolution. Consequently, UN-Women has seen a reduction in the scope of asset adjustments from $745,000 (166 assets) in 2013 to $15,000 (49 assets) in 2014. In addition, UN-Women developed an Atlas standard operating procedure for asset focal points to ensure that the asset register would be updated in a timely fashion. It has noted a reduction of 78 per cent in the number of assets without serial numbers and tag numbers in the register.

18. Concerning information assets, observations were made with regard to the Pakistan and Mali offices, together with the Fiji multi-country office, in relation to controls over information and communications technology assets. The offices have taken action to respond to the recommendations. In Pakistan, access to the server

room has already been restricted and items therein have been rearranged. In Mali, the office is working with UNDP to put in place a back-up system that is secure and accessible to all staff. An access control system was established in January 2015. In addition, information sessions on security and access to digital information were conducted during a staff retreat in January 2015. In Fiji, all office assets were tagged and a process to update the location of assets in Atlas was also completed on 2 July 2014. Asset verifications were conducted in Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu in June and July 2014.

Pre-financing of non-core projects

19. The issue of pre-financing of non-core projects in the Mali office was addressed by clarifying the accountability lines for compliance with the Programme and Operations Manual and through special training for staff, in particular new staff. Similar interventions were made to ensure compliance with the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers. In the case of the Fiji multi-country office, issues relating to expenditure limits and accurate recording of expenses were tackled by clarifying accountability lines and establishing a requirement to seek headquarters approval in such scenarios, as well as through staff training.

Investigations

20. Senior management is committed to following through all investigation cases and to ensuring timely and decisive action in that regard. Senior management will continue to work closely with the Office of Audit and Investigations to ensure timely reports and relevant management action in all cases.

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Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

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30 June-2 July 2015
Item 6 of the provisional agenda
Audit matters

Report of the Audit Advisory Committee for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2014

I. Introduction

1. Pursuant to item 30 of the terms of reference of the Audit Advisory Committee, the third report of the Committee to the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) provides a summary of the activities undertaken and the advice given by the Audit Advisory Committee in 2014. The present report is made available to the Executive Board, and upon request, the Chair presents the report to the Board.

Background

2. In May 2012, the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women approved the terms of reference of an oversight committee, to be known as the Audit Advisory Committee. The approved terms of reference are available from www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/accountability/audit.

3. Item 1 of the terms of reference describes the Committee as having been established to provide the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director with independent, external advice based on good practice regarding the organization's accountability framework and systems, including risk management. The Committee assists the Head of the Entity in fulfilling her oversight responsibilities in accordance with relevant best practices. The terms of reference are approved by the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director and may be modified from time to time, as necessary. The Committee has an advisory role and is not a governance body; no language or clauses in the terms of reference are intended to imply otherwise.

4. In September 2012, the Head of UN-Women formally constituted the Audit Advisory Committee to further enhance accountability and "promote proper

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governance and high ethical standards, as well as the adoption and use by management of best practices in risk and financial management" within UN-Women, in accordance with item 2 of the terms of reference.

5. The Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director appointed the following five members: Catherine Bertini (United States of America), William Fowler (United States), Elizabeth MacRae (Canada), Yuen Teen Mak (Singapore) and Frank Sap (Belgium). The Committee as a whole is made up of people with working knowledge of and familiarity with financial and programme matters, accounting, governance, internal audit and investigation, external audit, internal control and risk management practices and principles and United Nations intergovernmental and normative work and processes.

6. In accordance with items 6 and 7 of the terms of reference, all Committee members are independent and external to UN-Women. Additionally, Committee members complete an annual declaration of independence for the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director that assures the transparency of Committee members fulfilling their roles, without any interests being compromised.

II. Audit Advisory Committee activities and advice as at 31 December 2014

7. In 2014, the Audit Advisory Committee held three face-to-face meetings, from 22 to 24 April, on 16 and 17 July and on 24 and 25 November, and participated in one teleconference call on 11 December. UN-Women participants in the meetings included the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director, the two Deputy Executive Directors and relevant representatives of programme and operational senior management. As required, the Committee also met without management present and had separate in-camera meetings with the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director, the Board of Auditors and the Director of the Office of Audit and Investigations of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which is the Office responsible for the UN-Women Audit Unit. The Chair of the Committee also participated in the annual session of the Executive Board, in June 2014. In addition to formal meetings, Committee members continued their internal consultations and deliberations, document review and provision of advice to UN-Women management via telephone and e-mail interaction.

8. In October 2014, two Committee members participated in a three-day field visit to the regional office of UN-Women in Bangkok and the Entity's country office in Viet Nam. The objective of the field visit was to enable Committee members to better understand field operations, gain an appreciation for how the business objectives of UN-Women are achieved and effectively carry out their oversight role and add value to UN-Women. The terms of reference for the field visits had been adopted by the Committee at its meeting in July 2014 and endorsed by UN-Women management. Key observations from the field visit were shared with fellow Committee members and UN-Women management.

9. Minutes from the meetings were prepared and approved. The Committee interacts regularly with the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director during each meeting and formally reports on its deliberations after each on-site meeting.

A. Board of Auditors

10. The Committee met regularly with the Board of Auditors to share relevant information and understand the strategies implemented to ensure overall audit coverage for UN-Women, which includes the work performed by the UN-Women Audit Unit.

11. The Committee has regularly been updated on the status of implementation of the recommendations contained in the reports of the Board of Auditors and supports efforts by UN-Women to deal with the outstanding issues, particularly in ensuring that underlying systemic and strategic issues are addressed in a consistent and ongoing manner.

B. Organizational challenges and regional architecture

12. The Committee has been briefed extensively by senior management on the organizational challenges that UN-Women has experienced since its formal inception in 2011, when four entities of the United Nations were combined to create UN-Women.

13. The Committee notes that the opening, in 2014, of the Regional Office of UN-Women for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, in Istanbul, Turkey, completed the implementation of the regional architecture of UN-Women. The Committee understands that the benefits of the regional architecture are tangible in terms of empowered decision-making at the field office level. The Committee recognizes that regional and other field offices need the capacity to exercise authority in a decentralized work environment and notes that the requisite controls must be in place both at headquarters and in the field to monitor and mitigate operational and strategic risks. The Committee understands that a strengthened oversight mechanism has been established through country-specific internal control frameworks and delegation of authority.

14. Given that the implementation of the regional architecture was one of the Entity's organizational priorities, the Committee expects that through monitoring by UN-Women of its key performance indicators, it will be in a position to report substantively on the realization of benefits, including operational efficiencies, that are expected as a result of decentralization.

15. The Committee also understands the challenges of ensuring that appropriate staff complements are in place in each of the field offices and of providing the necessary training and learning required for the appropriate controls and risk management strategies to be implemented throughout the organization. The Committee understands that UN-Women has embarked on a programme to identify a modern human resources information system that meets the specific needs of UN-Women.

16. During 2014, UN-Women conducted a global workforce survey, for which there was a high rate of participation. Among other activities being implemented on the basis of the constructive feedback gathered during the survey, UN-Women is reassessing its recruitment processes, including options for introducing talent management and succession planning, as well as developing and implementing a rotation and mobility policy.

C. Resource mobilization

17. The Committee understands the potential opportunities that the regional architecture has created to strengthen and increase the linkages for inter-agency coordination and resource mobilization at the local level. However, the Committee continues to note the Entity's ongoing challenges regarding resource mobilization in 2014. Without increased contributions, the resources may not be sufficient for UN-Women to carry out its mandate.

18. UN-Women needs to develop a comprehensive and coherent resource mobilization strategy, which clarifies and formalizes organizational responsibility and accountability for both core and non-core resource mobilization at the country level, for foundations and for the private sector. Without clear assignment of responsibility, the risks of not meeting resource targets are increased.

19. Furthermore, while the pace of resource mobilization needs to be accelerated and delivery through implementing partners needs to be more effective, the Committee recommends prudence in UN-Women resource mobilization efforts to guard against a tendency to accept all monies, which could lead to non-reversible long-term commitments and future risks to the Entity's core mandate.

D. Enterprise risk management

20. The Committee notes that one long-outstanding internal audit recommendation suggests UN-Women develop a corporate policy on risk management to assist field offices in identifying, assessing, monitoring and reporting risks associated with their programmes. In 2014, UN-Women drafted an enterprise risk management policy and collaborated with other United Nations system entities on their lessons learned in implementing enterprise risk management strategies and processes. The Committee supports UN-Women efforts to date. The Committee underscores the importance of implementing a formal Entity-wide risk management system, which is integrated with existing management and decision-making processes, addresses risk exposures throughout the organization and in its external relationships and clearly identifies accountability and responsibility for risk ownership.

E. Evaluation function

21. The Committee continues to stress the importance of appropriately resourcing the evaluation function both centrally and decentrally, and of ensuring that evaluation results reflect achievements expected in the strategic plan and are used to increase knowledge and improve performance results. In this respect, it is particularly important that the annual evaluation report is practical, realistic and usable and reflects clearly how the programmes have been effective. As such, identification of good programme examples could showcase UN-Women capabilities and successes, so as to support resource mobilization and attract donor funds.

F. Internal audit

22. The Committee recognizes that UN-Women entered into a service level agreement with the Office of Audit and Investigations of UNDP in December 2011 to conduct internal audits and investigations on behalf of UN-Women and notes that a further agreement for an additional two years was entered into in December 2013.

23. In 2014, UN-Women commenced the process of determining whether value for money is obtained through outsourcing the internal audit function. The Committee recommends that, as part of the process of studying options for the most appropriate model, UN-Women determine the level of audit assurance required. This should then be fully supported by a comprehensive budget proposal for the consideration of the Executive Board, which carefully considers the resources required to manage the realization of a full transition to internal auditing capacity, along with the resources needed to establish the management and administrative infrastructure of the function.

24. At the time of writing, the Committee recommends that the UN-Women Audit Unit, established through the service level agreement with UNDP, be continued until such time as UN-Women has its full senior management structure in place and the costs and benefits of any subsequent transition of the internal audit function are identified and approved by the Executive Board.

25. The Committee understands that the UN-Women Audit Unit is considered operationally independent from UNDP. However, the Committee remains concerned that there may be potential conflicts of interest because UNDP undertakes some of the administrative functions for UN-Women through other service level agreements, such as for information and communications technology systems and the administration of payroll, benefits and entitlements. Furthermore, greater analysis as regards considerations of value for money must be undertaken for all functions outsourced to UNDP. As a compensating control and in order to ensure transparency and best value for money, the Committee reiterates the importance of having an independent organizational focal point in UN-Women to oversee internal audit activities and ensure that results are integrated into the senior management structure. The Committee's report for 2013 had already highlighted that the Director of Audit and Investigations of UNDP should regularly report to and have ongoing communication with senior management at UN-Women.

26. The Committee reviewed the annual workplans for the UN-Women Audit Unit for both 2014 and 2015 and recommended the approval in principle of the plans. The Committee was regularly briefed on the results of the various audit engagements performed during 2014, including systemic and recurring issues of interest. It is important that UN-Women address high priority recommendations, particularly those dealing with Entity-wide issues, such as the management of advances to implementing partners, resource mobilization strategies and efforts, procurement and project monitoring and oversight.

27. The Committee supports the continued strengthening of the internal audit services of UN-Women in order to ensure sufficiency of audit coverage in audit plans. The Committee reiterates the importance of regularly monitoring and assessing resource levels and capacity to ensure that they are appropriate and sufficient to address the overall assurance needs of UN-Women. It is also important that the UN-Women Audit Unit and the Board of Auditors engage in more ongoing

communication and collaboration to ensure the complementarity of the audit functions and encourage reliance by the Board of Auditors on the internal audit work performed, if appropriate.

28. The Committee again notes Executive Board decision 2012/10, adopted on 30 November 2012 (see UNW/2012/16), on the disclosure of internal audit reports, and the corresponding document on the standard operating procedures for applying the policy (Standard Operating Procedures No. 860 of the Office of Audit and Investigations). The Committee reiterates its recommendation that UN-Women develop and implement a communication strategy to ensure that audit results, recommendations and management actions are promulgated in an understandable and transparent manner, particularly when systemic and recurring issues are identified in internal audit reports.

G. Investigations

29. The Committee received regular updates from the Office of Audit and Investigations, providing an overview of the investigation caseload, the breakdown of the nature of the allegations and the status of the cases.

30. The Committee stresses the importance of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director and relevant members of UN-Women senior management receiving timely reports setting out the current investigation cases as well as management action taken as a result of closed investigation cases. In that way, UN-Women can satisfy itself that there is appropriate follow-up for cases that warrant investigation and that UN-Women accountability for decision-making and results is assured.

31. While the Committee has suggested a continuing review of the internal audit function, it is not recommending changing the outsourcing arrangement for the investigation function at the present time or in the near future. In this regard, it should be noted that UN-Women pays directly for each case investigated and investigation experts are highly specialized.

H. Financial statements

32. The Committee reviewed the draft financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2013. The Committee commends UN-Women on receiving an unqualified audit opinion from the Board of Auditors (see A/69/5/Add.12). The financial reporting for UN-Women continues to improve and refinements continue to be made, as necessary. The Committee recommends that UN-Women continue to monitor closely the management of advances made to implementing partners.

33. The Committee understands that the Board of Auditors has expressed concern relating to fully depreciated assets that are still in use and the policy for inventories. The Committee believes that both of these items are issues that are not material to the financial reporting for UN-Women and that both can be satisfactorily resolved.

I. Relationship with the United Nations Development Programme

34. As noted in paragraph 25, the Committee is aware that UN-Women has entered into service level agreements with UNDP to undertake some of the Entity's administrative functions. UN-Women remains accountable for the Entity's overall performance and the Committee therefore reiterates the importance of UN-Women implementing the relevant processes and procedures to ensure that any such outsourced functions are performed appropriately.

J. Strategic plan, 2014-2017

35. The Committee was updated regularly on the processes and approaches to implement the updated strategic plan, 2014-2017. The Committee supports the continued collaboration of UN-Women with partners within and outside the United Nations system in achieving its strategic objectives in advancing gender equality, promoting the empowerment of women and girls and ending violence against women.

III. Final considerations

36. The Audit Advisory Committee of UN-Women has reviewed the report on internal audit and investigation activities for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2014 (UNW/2015/4), to be submitted to the Executive Board at its annual session, taken note of the significant internal audit results identified, and concurs with its contents. In particular, the Committee supports the findings in paragraph 26 of the report, which states that "management not only should look to address the recommendations as they pertain to the location audited, but also should consider whether the risks identified apply to the broader organization and could be more effectively mitigated through a more global response, such as a policy or process change or clarification".

37. The Committee expresses support for the continued strengthening of governance, risk management, internal controls and accountability at UN-Women.

Annex

Management response to the report of the Audit Advisory Committee

1. The management of UN-Women acknowledges the third report of the Audit Advisory Committee and expresses its appreciation to the distinguished members of the Committee for their dedication to the organization's mandate.

Board of Auditors

2. UN-Women appreciates the Committee's support for the efforts made by the organization to deal with outstanding issues, and in particular in dealing with the underlying systematic and strategic issues highlighted in audit observations of the Board of Auditors. UN-Women is continuously taking action to address audit recommendations. For the financial year 2012, 16 of the 17 recommendations issued were implemented and 1 remains under implementation. For the financial year 2013, 9 of the 12 recommendations issued were implemented and 3 are under implementation. UN-Women management is committed to taking action to address the implementation of external audit recommendations issued by the Board of Auditors.

Organizational challenges and regional architecture

3. UN-Women agrees with the Committee as regards the importance of being able to track and verify the improvements in operational efficiency that have emerged from the implementation of the regional architecture, including those additional steps that were taken in 2014, such as the opening of the Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia in Istanbul, in 2014.

4. The Entity has a number of indicators in its strategic plan, 2014-17, as part of the organizational effectiveness and efficiency framework, that are being tracked to measure progress more broadly in relation to efficiencies that are anticipated as a result of the implementation of the regional architecture, among other organizational improvements. For example, UN-Women considers the marked improvement in its delivery rate, a key strategic plan indicator, to be directly attributable to the strengthening of capacity and the streamlining of business processes through the delegation of authority that occurred as part of the regional architecture.

5. At the same time, UN-Women has also noted areas where the regional architecture is not performing as anticipated, such as in terms of improvements in the quality and timeliness of donor reporting, which is another aspect that is tracked in the organizational effectiveness and efficiency framework. UN-Women is committed to addressing such issues.

6. The forthcoming independent evaluation of the regional architecture, which will begin in 2015 and the results of which will be reported to the Executive Board in 2016, will provide additional insights and lessons for future adjustments. The evaluation will be both a timely and robust independent review of the regional architecture and its utility and effectiveness in bringing about the intended changes to organizational performance, positioning and culture.

7. With regard to staffing, as part of the development of a human resources information system, UN-Women has mapped the current status of key global human resources business processes and is currently identifying the main areas for improving standard operating procedures as regards human resources. When completed, the new procedures will form the basis of the design for the automation and online workflows in the new human resources information system.

8. UN-Women is proactively responding to the feedback received as part of the global workforce survey through a participatory approach involving staff from headquarters and field offices. In that context, UN-Women has initiated the development of a comprehensive performance management framework that will also form the basis for the Entity's approach to talent management and succession planning. The framework will also include the development of a rotation and mobility policy.

Resource mobilization

9. Resource mobilization remains a top organizational priority and UN-Women values the attention that the Committee has given to the issue. In 2014, the Entity's strategy to widen and deepen the donor base saw encouraging progress, with its highest ever contributions to core resources ($164 million), representing an increase of 5 per cent compared with 2013, while the number of Governments contributing grew by 7.7 per cent, to a total of 143. Twenty-six donors contributed to UN-Women for the first time, and 44 contributed as part of multi-year pledges, with six Government donors contributing above the $10 million mark and two contributing more than $20 million. UN-Women will continue its focus in pursuing this growth strategy, focusing on deepening core contributions. Similarly, non-core contributions reached a historic high of $158 million in 2014. For the first time, UN-Women had reached its reduced annual resource mobilization targets for both core and non-core resources.

10. UN-Women updated its resource mobilization strategy in 2014, so as to make it more comprehensive and coherent. Accordingly, the overwhelming majority of field offices have developed resource mobilization strategies and action plans for resource mobilization and partnership-building, with clear assignments of responsibilities. At headquarters, the Bureau for Policy and Programme led resource mobilization efforts for non-core resources, while the Bureau for Intergovernmental Support and Strategic Partnerships led United Nations coordination efforts to mobilize core resources. Senior management is actively engaged in all resource mobilization efforts.

11. Regional and country strategies reflect the overarching objectives of the corporate resource mobilization strategy but are tailored to the unique context of each country/region. UN-Women headquarters is also providing ongoing resource mobilization training on private sector and Government fundraising to regional and country offices, while regional offices are increasingly providing resource mobilization support to country offices. UN-Women representatives are engaging with donor representatives at the country level, where most funding decisions on non-core resources are taken. On several occasions, the strategic notes and/or annual workplans of country offices have been used successfully as a resource mobilization tool.

12. UN-Women agrees with the Committee that the pace of resource mobilization needs to be accelerated and accompanied by effective programme delivery. UN-Women has a long-term aim of mobilizing $500 million per year by 2017, composed of $200 million in core resources and $300 million in non-core resources. In order to increase the organization's programme volume, UN-Women intends to drive growth by investing in a limited number of high-impact and scalable initiatives. A strong focus on high-impact initiatives will ensure that the proposed growth will likewise be driven by and responsive to the Entity's mandate and strategic plan.

13. UN-Women management values the Committee's support in driving resource mobilization strategies to reach the goals set out in the strategic plan, 2014-2017, and is committed to ensuring that all funds received are from reliable funding sources and fully aligned with the priorities of the strategic plan.

Enterprise risk management

14. UN-Women has formally adopted an enterprise risk management policy, following its review and approval by the senior management team in November 2014. The policy will serve as the foundation for the implementation of a risk management approach that is suitable for UN-Women and that is comprehensive in scope and integrated within the existing governance structure, decision-making processes, activities and processes. The establishment of the policy and procedures makes risk management explicitly part of the accountability system at UN-Women.

Evaluation function

15. UN-Women is committed to continuously strengthening the evaluation function, building on its strong foundation and ensuring it continues to provide evaluations of strategic use to the Entity and to the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment.

16. UN-Women is fully committed to achieving the target of investing 3 per cent of UN-Women expenditure in the evaluation function, both centrally and decentrally, as stated in the evaluation policy. The corporate evaluation plan was designed to ensure that all major elements of the strategic plan would be evaluated.

17. In order to ensure that the annual evaluation report for 2014 is practical, realistic and usable, the Evaluation Office will include clear key performance indicators in the report, with an assessment of their status versus expected targets (see UNW/2015/5). The indicators will provide practical and usable information covering all the key elements of the evaluation function, including the implementation status of the corporate evaluation plan.

18. The 2015 meta-analysis of evaluations managed by UN-Women, to be presented to the Executive Board at its second regular session, will provide programme examples and lessons learned on successful strategies and interventions.

Internal audit

19. UN-Women acknowledges the Committee's recommendation as concerns evaluating the benefits and costs of outsourcing the internal audit function to UNDP or of having the function move in-house. In December 2014, the potential cost implications for an in-house internal audit function were estimated at an additional $1 million per year, for staff costs only.

20. The full budget implications will be presented to the Executive Board in due course. As recommended by the Committee, UN-Women plans to continue the service level agreement with UNDP until such time as funds for the transition of the internal audit function have been approved by the Executive Board.

21. UN-Women notes the Committee's concern regarding a potential conflict of interest, with UNDP performing the internal audit function for UN-Women as well as such outsourced functions as treasury, information and communications technology systems and the administration of payroll, benefits and entitlements. UN-Women management is committed to ensuring that adequate oversight is in place to address any potential conflict of interest.

22. UN-Women acknowledges the Committee's recommendation that high priority recommendations in the area of the management of advances to implementing partners, country office resource mobilization strategies, procurement, and project monitoring and oversight, be addressed. UN-Women has been proactively addressing those issues. As of 31 December 2014, the Office of Audit and Investigations reported that 75 per cent of recommendations had been fully implemented, 17 per cent were in the process of being implemented and implementation activities had yet to be started for 8 per cent. UN-Women is committed to the full implementation of the recommendations and will continually ensure that follow-up is diligent.

23. UN-Women appreciates the Committee's support for the ongoing strengthening of internal audit services to ensure sufficient audit coverage in audit plans. UN-Women will institute semi-annual briefings between the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of UN-Women and the Director of Audit and Investigations of UNDP. The UN-Women Audit Unit and the Board of Auditors will also meet periodically to ensure complementarity of the audit functions and to avoid overlap in the execution of their workplans.

24. UN-Women notes the Committee's recommendation on developing and implementing a communication strategy to ensure that audit results, recommendations and management actions are promulgated in an understandable and transparent manner. Audit reports are published on a public website within 30 calendar days of issuance (available from www.unwomen.org/en/about-us/accountability/audit/disclosure-of-internal-audit-reports). When formulating its management responses and related action plans, UN-Women ensures that critical and recurring issues are addressed. Auditors periodically perform a review of actions taken by UN-Women to implement the recommendations, and report on the implementation status. In addition, UN-Women management has taken action in communicating with its donors in response to specific internal audit reports published under the public disclosure policy, effective from 1 December 2012. UN-Women will further discuss the communication strategy referred to by the

Committee at the senior management level and, if required, additional guidance will be sought from the Committee.

25. UN-Women fully agrees with the Committee's recommendation on addressing issues identified in a specific audit in a systemic way and with a global response, including a change in policy or process. When reviewing audit recommendations, the relevance of risks, particularly in areas of high risk to other parts of the organization is considered. UN-Women is also establishing an internal working group on audit issues to take action on the Committee's recommendation, among other considerations.

Investigations

26. UN-Women management notes the Committee's appreciation for the regular updates provided on the investigation caseload and agrees with the Committee's recommendation as regards ensuring that UN-Women senior management receives timely reports on investigations.

27. UN-Women also notes the Committee's recommendation not to change the outsourcing arrangement for the investigation function at the present time or in the near future, given the highly specialized nature of the function.

Financial statements

28. UN-Women management is pleased that the Committee has taken note of the unqualified audit opinion on the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2013 and the continued improvements in financial reporting.

29. UN-Women agrees with the Committee that the Entity needs to closely monitor the management of advances to implementing partners. During 2014, in addition to the regular review through month-end closure instructions and the country office assessment tool, the regional offices also commenced oversight of country office outstanding advances balances.

30. Further, the Division of Management and Administration and the Programme Division have sent communications to field offices emphasizing the importance of advance liquidations. The two divisions have also held meetings with regional offices to identify specific issues with advance monitoring and liquidation and to provide support for advance liquidations. Corporate training for implementing partners has been prepared and provided to a number of partners of specifically targeted offices.

Relationship with the United Nations Development Programme

31. UN-Women management agrees with the Committee's observation as to the importance of monitoring functions outsourced to UNDP. For key functions undertaken by UNDP on behalf of UN-Women, the Division of Management and Administration has put in place the following controls to ensure that outsourced functions are performed appropriately: (a) concerning treasury services, UN-Women has agreed to the investment policy and guidelines of UNDP and holds quarterly

investment review meetings with UNDP on its investments; (b) concerning payments and bank reconciliations, UN-Women reviews the bank reconciliations prepared by UNDP, on a monthly basis; (c) concerning human resources for international staff based at headquarters, UN-Women uses a payroll validation tool to check the information submitted to UNDP for the processing of payroll for staff members in the Professional and higher categories and for General Service; (d) concerning human resources in field-based offices, a monitoring and/or validation process has been implemented, so as to ensure accuracy before the payroll for local staff salaries is finalized; (e) concerning information technology services, there are governance mechanisms in place, with regular service delivery review meetings as the primary control mechanism. In addition, UN-Women utilizes automated monitoring tools to track the availability of systems delivered by UNDP. Furthermore, UN-Women received a certification letter from the Deputy Assistant Administrator of UNDP for all transactions undertaken on behalf of UN-Women for the year ended 31 December 2014.

Strategic plan, 2014-2017

32. UN-Women values the Committee's support for the strategic plan, 2014-17, and will continue to keep the Committee updated on its implementation. UN-Women management also welcomes the support provided by the Committee for the Entity's continued collaboration with partners both within and outside the United Nations system to achieve its strategic objectives in advancing gender equality, promoting the empowerment of women and girls and ending violence against women.

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Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

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Evaluation

Report on the evaluation function of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, 2014

Summary

The annual report has been prepared in accordance with the evaluation policy of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the strategic plan, 2014-2017.

The report provides information on the performance of the evaluation function at corporate and decentralized levels, as well as the contribution of UN-Women to the United Nations system-wide coordination of gender-responsive evaluation and national evaluation capacity development. In addition, the report presents the 2015 programme of work for the independent Evaluation Office.

The Executive Board may wish to: (a) take note of the present report and the programme of work for 2015 of the independent Evaluation Office; (b) welcome the efforts made by UN-Women and the progress achieved in systematic strengthening of the evaluation function; (c) welcome the progress of UN-Women in leading system-wide gender evaluation efforts; (d) request UN-Women to continue to strengthen its evaluation capacities and allocate adequate human and financial resources to the evaluation function; (e) commend the efforts of UN-Women in fostering innovative partnerships for national evaluation capacity development; (f) request UN-Women to enhance the coverage of evaluations, implementation rate of planned evaluations, submission of management responses and implementation of submitted management responses to evaluations; (g) request the independent Evaluation Office to continue to pursue United Nations system-wide gender-evaluation efforts and foster innovative partnerships for national evaluation capacity development; and (h) request UN-Women to present a separate budget line for evaluation activities in the integrated budget for 2016-2017, to be considered by the Executive Board at the second regular session in 2015.

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I. Evaluation for sustainable development

1. The year 2014 has seen important progress in the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment. In addition, the proposal to include gender equality in the post-2015 development agenda as a stand-alone goal and integrated across all other goals elevates the strategic importance of gender-responsive evaluations.

2. The Secretary-General underlined the importance of evaluation within the transformative post-2015 development agenda (see A/69/700). Gender-responsive evaluation principles, including national ownership and participatory processes, were highlighted. Furthermore, the General Assembly adopted resolution 69/237 on building capacity for the evaluation of development activities at the country level, which reiterates the importance of building national capacity for the evaluation of development activities and invites the entities of the United Nations development system, with the collaboration of national and international stakeholders, to support, upon request, efforts to further strengthen the capacity of Member States for evaluation, in alignment with their national policies and priorities.

3. The United Nations Evaluation Group joined EvalPartners, the global evaluation partnership co-led by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation, to mark 2015 as the International Year of Evaluation. Through consultative processes and events around the world, the global evaluation community will identify the key future priorities to ensure that evaluation will be "fit for purpose" in the context of the post-2015 development agenda, and with the vision of promoting gender-responsive evaluations.

4. Thanks to its strong evaluation function as assessed by the UN-Women Global Evaluation Advisory Committee,[1] the independent Evaluation Office of UN-Women is strategically positioned to work with partners in the United Nations system and beyond to actively contribute to the above processes and outcomes.

II. Evaluation function

5. The strategic goal of the UN-Women evaluation function is to enhance the ability of UN-Women to achieve normative, operational and coordination results on gender equality. To accomplish that goal, the independent Evaluation Office manages corporate evaluations, supports decentralized evaluation systems, leads the United Nations system on gender-responsive evaluation and fosters national capacities for gender-responsive evaluation.

6. The UN-Women evaluation policy (UNW/2012/12), which entered into force in January 2013, guides the evaluation function. In 2014, the independent Evaluation Office prepared a comprehensive evaluation strategic plan to operationalize the policy. The strategy seeks to enhance the ability of evaluation managers to deliver high-quality evaluations while strengthening the use of evaluation for accountability, learning and evidence-based decision-making. Regional

[1] See report of the Global Evaluation Advisory Committee on the external assessments of the evaluation function of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UNW/2015/CRP.1).

evaluation strategic plans were also developed to ensure relevance to the different regional contexts.

7. Based on consideration and discussion of three external assessments undertaken in 2014,[2] the Global Evaluation Advisory Committee presented its own overall assessment and recommendations to the UN-Women Executive Board in February 2015. The Committee concluded that UN-Women has a strong central evaluation function and emphasized the vital role evaluation plays in bringing evidence and knowledge to the normative, operational and coordination work of UN-Women.

A. Performance of the evaluation function

8. Recognizing the importance of strengthening oversight of the evaluation function, the independent Evaluation Office established a global evaluation oversight system with the purpose of providing transparent information on the performance of the evaluation function at corporate and decentralized levels. The global evaluation oversight system is based on eight key performance indicators. In 2014, performance based on the key performance indicators continued to be presented to senior management at headquarters and field offices, highlighting areas of strengths and issues that required immediate management attention. That contributed to enhancing senior management's attention to evaluations.

Table 1
Trends in key performance indicators, 2013 and 2014

Key performance indicator	*Description*	*2013*	*2014*	*Target (by 2017)*	*Overall assessment*
		(percentage)			
Financial resources invested in evaluation function	Evaluation expenditure over total UN-Women expenditure	1.3	2.2[a]	3.0	On track
Human resources for monitoring and evaluation	Offices that appointed monitoring and evaluation focal point or officer	83.0	98.0	100.0	Almost achieved
Evaluation coverage	Offices that conducted at least one evaluation since 2011	67.0	68.0	100.0	Needs improvement
Evaluation implementation rate	Percent of evaluations being implemented[b]	83.0	71.0	95.0	Needs improvement
Quality of evaluations	Percent of evaluations rated "satisfactory and above"	85.0	100.0	100.0	Achieved
Evaluation reports posted on GATE	Percent of completed evaluation reports posted on GATE	100.0	100.0	100.0	Achieved

[2] The United Nations Evaluation Group professional peer review; the Joint Inspection Unit analysis of the evaluation function in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2014/6); and the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network assessment of UN-Women.

Key performance indicator	*Description*	*2013*	*2014*	*Target (by 2017)*	*Overall assessment*
		(percentage)			
Management response submission to GATE	Percent of completed evaluation reports submitted with management response to GATE	85.0	86.0	100.0	Needs improvement
Implementation of management response	Percent of management response key actions being implemented	88.0	83.0	90.0	Needs improvement
Evaluation coverage	Offices that conducted at least one evaluation since 2011	67.0	68.0	100.0	Needs improvement

Source: Global evaluation oversight system.
Abbreviation: GATE, Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use system.
[a] The figure for 2014 also includes the institutional budget.
[b] Refers to the number of evaluations completed and initiated against the total number of evaluations planned in 2014.

9. As shown in table 1 above, while four of eight key performance indicators are either achieved or on track, four need further improvements. Below is a detailed analysis of each key performance indicator.

Key performance indicator 1: financial resources

10. The evaluation policy recommends that 3 per cent of the UN-Women budget be invested in the evaluation function. While it is likely that resources invested in evaluation will fluctuate yearly, that key performance indicator provides an overall indication of the financial commitment of UN-Women to the evaluation function (see table 2).

Table 2
Expenditure in evaluation function, 2013 and 2014
(United States dollars)

	2013	*2014[a]*
Total UN-Women expenditure	269 660 584	270 537 900
Total expenditure in evaluation	3 576 396	5 917 163
Independent Evaluation Office	2 123 750	4 499 942
Decentralized evaluations	1 226 729	1 417 221
Total expenditure in evaluation (percentage)	**1.3**	**2.2**

Source: The expenditure figure for the independent Evaluation Office was generated from Automatically Tuned Linear Algebra Software (ATLAS) by the Division of Management and Administration, and figures for decentralized evaluations were compiled by the independent Evaluation Office on the basis of inputs from field offices.
[a] The figure for 2014 also includes the institutional budget.

11. In 2014, 2.2 per cent of total UN-Women expenditure was invested in the evaluation function. Of this, 76.0 per cent comprised independent Evaluation Office

expenditures and 24.0 per cent related to decentralized evaluations, including divisions at headquarters.

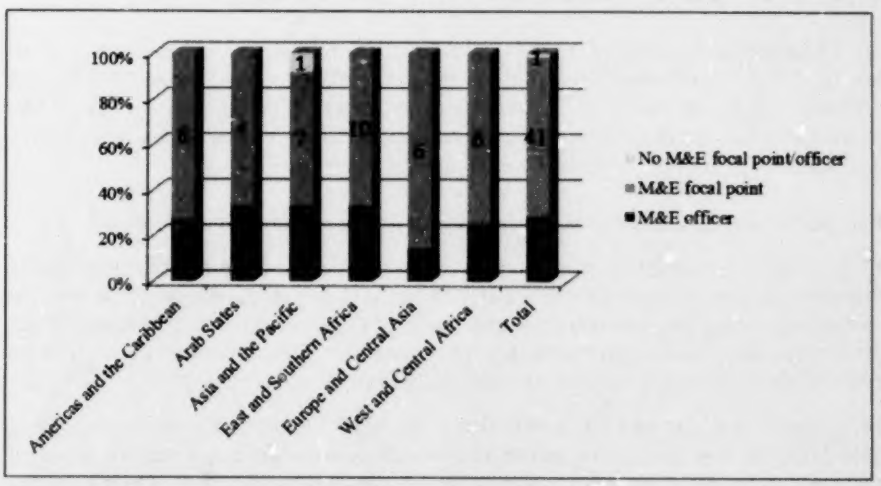
12. In 2014, UN-Women significantly increased the resources invested in the evaluation function, moving from 1.3 per cent in 2013 to 2.2 per cent in 2014. That represents a positive move towards achieving the target of 3.0 per cent as established in the evaluation policy.

Key performance indicator 2: human resources

13. In 2014, the independent Evaluation Office comprised 16 staff members: 9 based at headquarters, 6 regional evaluation specialists in each regional office and one Junior Professional Officer in the Eastern and South Africa region. Regional evaluation specialists are independent Evaluation Office staff deployed in regional offices reporting directly to the Director of the independent Evaluation Office. That arrangement was considered by the United Nations Evaluation Group peer review as a positive practice to strengthen the impartiality, credibility and quality of decentralized evaluations.

14. The percentage of offices that appointed either Monitoring and Evaluation Officers or focal points reached 98 per cent compared with 83 per cent in 2013. While that is a very positive development, it is important to highlight that the majority, or 71 per cent, of UN-Women country offices still rely on focal points for monitoring and evaluation functions, resulting in staff with multiple roles (see figure 1). In addition, owing to frequent changes of Monitoring and Evaluation-appointed focal points, continuous investment in capacity development is needed at the country level.

Figure 1
Human resources for Monitoring and Evaluation Officers/focal points by region



Source: Global evaluation oversight system.
Abbreviation: M&E, Monitoring and Evaluation.

Key performance indicator 3: coverage and types of evaluations

15. Despite the requirement in the evaluation policy to evaluate at least one third of the overall office portfolio during the strategic note period, 32 per cent of offices have not conducted any evaluation since 2011 (see figure 2). Limited available resources, low capacity of country offices to manage evaluations, frequent change of Monitoring and Evaluation focal points, postponement, cancellation and, in a few cases, the conversion of planned external independent evaluations into internal review processes, contributed to the slow progress in expanding coverage of evaluations.

Figure 2
Evaluation coverage by region, 2011-2014

Source: Global evaluation oversight system.

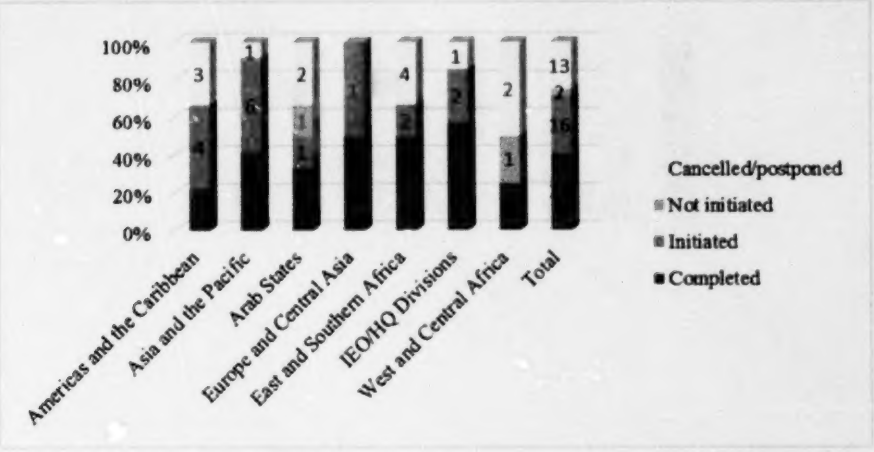
16. Evaluations conducted in 2014 assessed the effectiveness of results at various levels: 71 per cent assessed results at the level of outcomes, while 29 per cent assessed results at the level of outputs. The focus of the large majority of the evaluations reflects the importance of assessing outcome results, which is a positive development in support of results-based management.

Key performance indicator 4: implementation rate of planned evaluations

17. Of the 53 evaluations planned by UN-Women in 2014, 74 per cent were being implemented (40 per cent completed and 34 per cent initiated). A total of 26 per cent of the evaluations planned were not implemented (2 per cent not initiated and 24 per cent cancelled and/or postponed) (see figure 3). The number of completed evaluations in 2014 fell from 55 per cent in 2013 to 40 per cent in 2014.

18. Insufficient funding for evaluations, the weak quality of consultants' work, over-planning and the late initiation of evaluations were the main reasons reported for delays, cancellation or postponement of planned evaluations. Owing to the frequent change of Monitoring and Evaluation focal points, evaluation plans have not been always implemented or monitored in a systematic manner in the Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use system.

Figure 3
Evaluation implementation rate, 2014



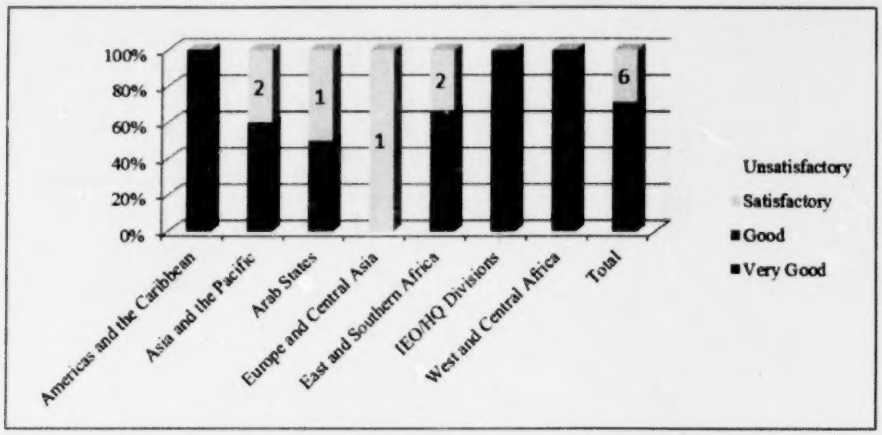
Source: Global evaluation oversight system.
Abbreviations: HQ, headquarters; IEO, independent Evaluation Office.

Key performance indicator 5: quality of evaluation reports

19. The meta-evaluation conducted by an external independent reviewer within the framework of the Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis system assessed the overall quality of all evaluations completed in 2014. The assessment rated 43.0 per cent of evaluation reports "very good", 28.5 per cent "good" and 28.5 per cent "satisfactory" (see figure 4). The appointment of regional evaluation specialists in each of the regions, the roll-out of the evaluation quality standards and assurance systems and the increased focus on outcomes of most evaluations have contributed to the overall improvement in the quality of evaluation reports. The development effectiveness assessment commissioned by the Governments of Canada and the Netherlands also assessed the quality of evaluations managed by UN-Women. Overall, the review revealed similar findings to the meta-evaluation by the independent Evaluation Office.

20. However, 35 per cent of evaluations managed by field offices (6 of 17) were found to be "satisfactory", and required improvements in order to fully meet United Nations Evaluation Group standards, in particular in terms of presenting a full description of the context, object and stakeholders, ethics and the sampling frame. While the overall United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women score equated to "meeting requirements", only 10 per cent of reports "exceeded requirement" and 42 per cent "met requirement". The remaining 38 per cent of reports "approached requirement" while 10 per cent "missed the requirement". That implies that nearly half of reports are not yet fully compliant with the System-wide Action Plan. That calls for continuous and systematic oversight, technical assistance and capacity development on gender-responsive evaluation, particularly at the decentralized level.

Figure 4
Quality of evaluations, 2014



Source: Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis system.
Abbreviations: HQ, headquarters; IEO, independent Evaluation Office.

21. The quality of reports was correlated with the geographic scope of the evaluation: global evaluations averaged highest, followed by regional and national evaluations. There was a strong correlation between outcome evaluations and high-quality reports, with 86 per cent rated as good or very good (36 per cent and 50 per cent, respectively). By comparison, only 33 per cent of output-level evaluations were rated as good or above.

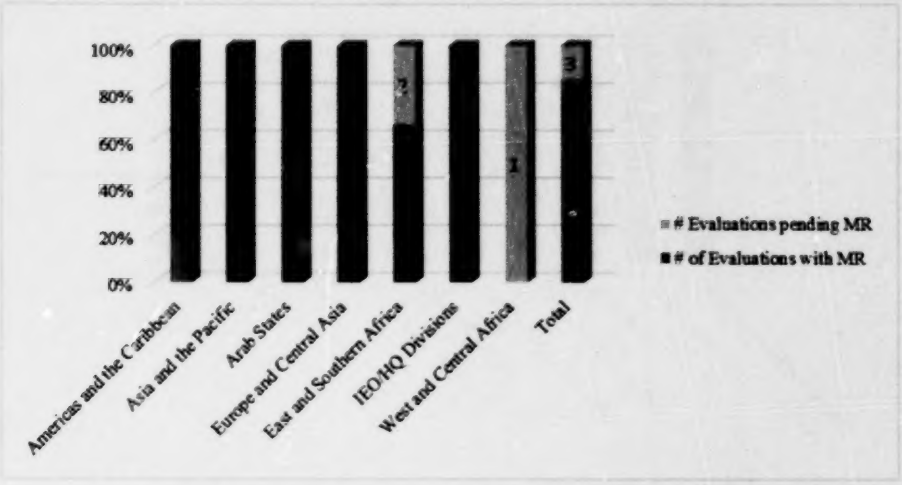
Key performance indicator 6: submission rate of completed evaluation reports to the Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use system

22. Per the requirement of the evaluation policy, all offices are expected to upload their final evaluation reports and management response within six weeks of completion to the Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use system. Similar to the pattern observed from the previous year, 100 per cent of completed evaluations were uploaded and made publicly available through the system.

Key performance indicator 7: management response submission to the Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use system

23. The evaluation policy requires UN-Women management to prepare and upload a management response to each completed evaluation to the Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use system. Of 21 evaluations completed during the reporting period, 86 per cent of them have a management response, similar to 2013, with 85 per cent (see figure 5). However, it should be noted that all regions except Africa have 100 per cent compliance with management response.

Figure 5
Submission rate of completed evaluation reports with management response to the Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use system

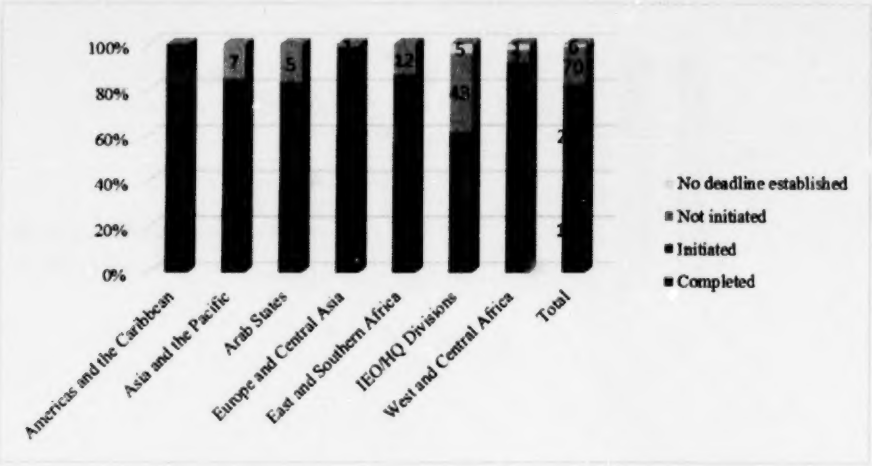


Source: Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use system.
Abbreviations: HQ, headquarters; IEO, independent Evaluation Office; MR, management response.

Key performance indicator 8: implementation status of management response

24. Of the actions agreed to in management responses, 83 per cent were being implemented: 37 per cent were completed and 46 per cent are ongoing, representing a slight decrease from 88 per cent in the previous year. Of the remaining actions, 16 per cent have not been initiated, and no deadlines have been established for the remaining 1 per cent of key actions (see figure 6).

Figure 6
Implementation status of evaluation management response/key actions by region, 2013



Source: Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use system.
Abbreviations: HQ, headquarters; IEO, independent Evaluation Office.

B. Corporate evaluations

25. In 2014, the independent Evaluation Office made a special effort to ensure timeliness, quality and use of corporate evaluation reports, in addition to introducing methodological innovations. The independent Evaluation Office presented to the Executive Board two corporate evaluations, on peace and security and on the joint evaluation of joint gender programmes, in addition to the meta-analysis of evaluations managed by UN-Women in 2013. All three reports presented achievements of UN-Women, highlighted areas for improvement and developed recommendations that senior management took into consideration.

26. By the end of 2014, the implementation rate for corporate evaluations in 2014-2015 was 100 per cent. As is seen in table 3, of seven planned corporate evaluation exercises, three were "completed" and four are "on track".

Table 3
Implementation status of planned corporate evaluations, 2014-2015

	Title of corporate evaluation	*Status*	*Additional information*
1.	2014 meta-analysis	Completed	Presented to the Executive Board
2.	Thematic evaluation of UN-Women contribution to women's economic empowerment	Completed	Presented to the Executive Board

	Title of corporate evaluation	*Status*	*Additional information*
3.	External assessment of UN-Women evaluation function	Completed	Presented to the Executive Board
4.	Review on gender equality and development in the United Nations system	On track	To be presented to the Executive Board at the annual session, 2015 (part 1); and second regular session, 2015 (part 2)
5.	2015 meta-analysis	On track	To be presented to the Executive Board at the second regular session, 2015
6.	Evaluation of UN-Women normative support work and its operational linkages[a]	On track	To be presented to the Executive Board at the second regular session, 2015
7	Evaluation of UN-Women contribution to the United Nations system coordination on gender equality and the empowerment of women	On track	To be presented to the Executive Board at the first regular session, 2016

[a] The Office of Internal Oversight Services conducted this evaluation in collaboration with the independent Evaluation Office.

27. The corporate evaluation plan for 2014-2017 was revised to ensure that corporate evaluations can inform, in a timely manner, the midterm review of the UN-Women strategic plan for 2014-2017. The revision mainly consisted of changing the schedule of the planned corporate evaluations while maintaining the principle that all major elements of the strategic plan would be evaluated during the strategic plan cycle. The updated corporate evaluation plan advances the completion of two corporate evaluations in 2016, instead of 2017: an evaluation on organizational effectiveness at country and regional levels, and an evaluation on UN-Women strategic partnerships.

Fostering innovations to enhance relevance and quality of evaluations

28. The Global Evaluation Advisory Committee report requested the independent Evaluation Office to explore innovative approaches and methodologies to enhance corporate evaluations. The evaluation of women's economic empowerment introduced a number of innovative elements in its management, design and methodology. In terms of management, in addition to existing quality assurance mechanisms such as internal and external reference groups, three external independent advisers assured the quality of substantive thematic and methodological issues, while the independent Evaluation Office staff closely oversaw all phases of the evaluation.

29. With regard to evaluation design and methodology, a specific evaluation criterion on gender equality was included, while placing strong emphasis on assessing normative, coordination and operational results and their interrelations. In

line with gender-responsive design, the evaluation introduced innovative participatory techniques such as collaborative outcome reporting and participatory videos, while drawing on the cutting-edge feminist economics research in analysing substantive women's economic empowerment issues.

Use of corporate evaluation to foster change

30. The Global Evaluation Advisory Committee report invited UN-Women to strengthen the use of evaluation. For that reason, the independent Evaluation Office is starting to report to the Executive Board not only on the implementation rate of management responses of corporate evaluations, but also, and most importantly, on the changes, or lack thereof, in UN-Women policies, strategies and practices that corporate evaluations have contributed to.

31. The first corporate thematic evaluation, on UN-Women's contribution to ending violence against women, was completed and presented to the Executive Board in 2013. As at December 2014, 100 per cent of evaluation recommendations resulted in action: 19 per cent of actions were completed, while 81 per cent have been initiated and are still ongoing. Most importantly, the evaluation contributed to three key areas of change. First, responding to the recommendation to continue its substantive inputs and evidence-based work in support of enhanced normative frameworks, UN-Women has prioritized ending violence against women as a target for the post-2015 development discussions, while working closely with the Statistics Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat and the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics to agree on the indicators to monitor the target.

32. Second, UN-Women has strengthened its linkages between normative and operational work on ending violence against women. In line with the recommendation to provide more guidance at the regional and country levels on ways to translate normative work into operational work, the Ending Violence against Women Section prepared guidance notes on how to implement the agreed conclusions on the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls, adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-seventh session (see E/2013/27, chap. I, sect. A).

33. Third, the evaluations issued a specific recommendation for UN-Women to develop a strategy for ending violence against women. In 2014, UN-Women developed a strategy with two purposes: (a) to provide the foundation to ensure internal clarity on the focus and coordination of work related to ending violence against women and (b) to outline the priorities for the organization's substantive, policy and programme work on ending violence against women as well as the processes for ensuring advancement in strategic areas. The draft strategy is currently being reviewed and is expected to be finalized in 2015.

C. Decentralized evaluation system

34. Congruent with the decentralized nature of the organization, over 90 per cent of evaluations supported by UN-Women are managed by field offices. Decentralized evaluations are essential for assessing issues of significance at the programmatic level and play a critical role in providing evidence for informed decisions and managing for results. They also support management oversight and accountability to

stakeholders and partners and provide key inputs for corporate evaluations and United Nations Development Assistance Framework evaluations.

Systems to improve the quality, credibility and use of evaluations

35. To improve credibility, quality and use of evaluations at the decentralized level, the independent Evaluation Office continued to strengthen its quality assurance mechanisms and collaborated with the Programme Division of UN-Women and the regional offices to enhance the strategic planning and use of evaluations. All decentralized evaluations are quality-assured through the Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis system and publicly made available on the Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use system along with their management responses. In 2014, the independent Evaluation Office, within the framework of the Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis system, produced an independent assessment of the quality of all evaluation reports completed in 2013 and provided individual practical feedback to 24 offices on ways to improve the quality and usefulness of future evaluations.

36. To facilitate transparency and management accountability and improve use of evaluation, the Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use system was enhanced with additional features to increase its usefulness. The system now integrates the quality review function of the Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis system and has been linked to the gender equality evaluation portal. To enhance cost-effectiveness, the system was also migrated to the UN-Women information technology infrastructure.

37. To ensure greater clarity on the roles and responsibilities of senior managers, Monitoring and Evaluation Officers/focal points and evaluation managers, the evaluation chapter of the UN-Women programme and operations manual was revised. In alignment with the global evaluation strategic plan, all regional offices except one developed regional evaluation strategies through consultative processes, grounded in the specific regional needs and priorities.[3]

38. Decentralized evaluation plans continued to be an integral component of the country and regional planning and approval processes. In 2014, 20 field offices developed new multi-year costed decentralized evaluation plans aligned with their respective strategic notes, while several others made necessary revisions on their existing plans. The independent Evaluation Office provided extensive support throughout the planning process and provided inputs to the evaluability of results frameworks and evaluation-related sections of the strategic notes.

Internal evaluation capacity development

39. Concerted efforts continued to be undertaken by the independent Evaluation Office and regional offices to improve evaluation capacity at regional and country levels. Those include learning events, communities of practice, evaluation seminars, a help-desk function and the provision of technical and oversight support to field offices. In 2014, 226 staff were trained on the planning, management and use of gender-responsive evaluation.

[3] The Regional Evaluation Specialist in the Economic Commission for Africa region assumed work in December 2014. The regional evaluation strategy will be developed and endorsed in 2015.

40. Leveraging cost-effective new technologies, a series of live webinars were organized in all regions. The webinars enhanced understanding of 135 Programme Officers and Monitoring and Evaluation Officers/focal points on evaluation-related roles and responsibilities as well as the key provisions of the evaluation policy. Furthermore, six webinars were organized in Asia and the Pacific region, and one in the Americas and the Caribbean, with a focus on disseminating evaluation results and promoting greater utilization of findings and recommendations. The independent Evaluation Office also provided orientation on the evaluation function to newly recruited staff at headquarters and Monitoring and Evaluation staff at the country office level.

41. As part of their core area of support, the regional evaluation specialists provided consistent technical and oversight support to field offices. The support included quality assurance of decentralized evaluation plans, draft and final evaluation terms of reference and reports, selection of consultants, dissemination of evaluation reports, management responses and use of the Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use system.

42. The independent Evaluation Office also enhanced its knowledge management systems in support of the evaluation function. The global online evaluation community of practice continued to serve as a platform for exchange and information-sharing among UN-Women staff. The network reached 177 staff members globally, a 24 per cent increase from the previous year. A new electronic newsletter was launched with the aim of keeping UN-Women staff and partners abreast on evaluation issues. A total of six newsletters have been published so far and widely disseminated internally and among partners.

43. While notable progress has been made in boosting internal capacities on evaluation, much more still needs to be done. The United Nations Evaluation Group peer review also underlined the importance of further improving the quality, credibility and impartiality of decentralized evaluations.

Learning from and use of decentralized evaluation

44. The independent Evaluation Office has made concerted efforts to promote learning from and use of decentralized evaluations for informed strategic decision-making and programming. The Programme Division and the independent Evaluation Office systematically contributed to the strategic note peer review group sessions by advocating for increased use of evaluations for designing new strategic notes.

45. The decentralized evaluation function has made special efforts in facilitating the use of evaluation findings. For example, in the Eastern and Southern Africa region, the gender support programme evaluation in Zimbabwe has been used to inform development of a joint programme on gender equality and a joint programme on gender-based violence. Donors have used the evidence and findings of that evaluation to make a decision to continue their support to the programmes.

46. In the Europe and Central Asia region, in response to the specific recommendation made by the final evaluation of "Women connect across conflicts: building accountability for implementation of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1889 (2009)", the Kazakhstan multi-country office initiated a study in Tajikistan to create an evidence-based advocacy campaign to address early marriage as a violation of women's rights. The study has been used

to inform development of the next phase of the programme. The same evaluation also led to the initiation of a specialized training on gender-sensitive mediation for natural resource management and use disputes at border crossings. The evaluation of "Promoting gender-responsive policies in the western Balkans" supported identification of the programme priority areas and led to the development of a robust performance monitoring framework as part of the next phase of the project.

47. In the Americas and the Caribbean region, the "Safe city for women and girls programme" evaluation by the country office for Brazil been used to improve the design and implementation of the next phase of the programme. As a result, the new programme prioritized implementation of a new municipal council plan as a mechanism for implementing the municipal law on ending violence against women.

III. United Nations system-wide coordination of gender-responsive evaluation

48. In 2014, UN-Women intensified its support on system-wide coordination on gender responsive evaluation mainly through the five areas presented below.

A. United Nations Evaluation Group and regional United Nations evaluation groups

49. UN-Women continued its strong support and leadership in United Nations Evaluation Group activities. In 2014, the Director of the independent Evaluation Office served as Vice-Chair of the United Nations Evaluation Group, with a specific mandate to enhance the Group's strategic partnership within the global evaluation community. In addition, the independent Evaluation Office participated in and made substantial contributions to the other key strategic areas. The independent Evaluation Office also contributed to the discussions that led to the adoption of General Assembly resolution 69/237 on building capacity for the evaluation of development activities at the country level.

50. In addition to playing a leading role in developing the United Nations Evaluation Group guidance document, entitled "Integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluation — towards UNEG guidance", the independent Evaluation Office's leadership and participation in the strategic objectives of the United Nations Evaluation Group helped to leverage partnership and resources to maximize joint action on the promotion of gender-responsive evaluations in the work of United Nations agencies and external stakeholders.

51. UN-Women remained active in regional United Nations evaluation networks and platforms, with the aim of promoting gender-responsive evaluations and United Nations coherence in evaluation and developing United Nations field staff skills and knowledge on evaluation. UN-Women continued to provide leadership and remained an active member of the regional United Nations evaluation groups in the Americas and the Caribbean, Eastern and Southern Africa, and Asia and the Pacific. In the Arab States, UN-Women launched and facilitated discussions on establishing a regional inter-agency evaluation group with six sister United Nations agencies. Those engagements made it possible to train more than 164 United Nations staff and other partners.

B. United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

52. The ultimate goal of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women evaluation performance indicator is that all United Nations system entities meet the requirements in terms of integrating gender equality into their respective evaluations. Based on the piloting of the original methodology to report against that indicator and the results of a global survey administered among System-wide Action Plan evaluation focal points of all System-wide Action Plan reporting entities, a United Nations Evaluation Group task force led by UN-Women revised the first System-wide Action Plan technical note and related scorecard.

53. In 2014, of the 62 United Nations entities that submitted a report, 16 entities reported that the indicator was not applicable to them either because no evaluations were conducted by the entity or they did not have an evaluation function. Of the 46 entities that reported against the indicator, 48 per cent reported "meeting requirements", 41 per cent reported "approaching requirements" and 9 per cent reported "missing requirements". Only 2 per cent reported "exceeding requirements". Overall, the evaluation performance indicator of the System-wide Action Plan was perceived as a powerful tool to raise the importance of integrating gender equality in the evaluations conducted by the different United Nations entities.

54. The independent Evaluation Office institutionalized the evaluation performance indicator of the System-wide Action Plan by integrating it into the Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis system. In 2014, UN-Women reported "meeting requirements" for the System-wide Action Plan evaluation performance indicator, based on an external independent assessment of all UN-Women corporate and decentralized evaluations.

C. Independent system-wide evaluation

55. In 2013, the General Assembly approved a new policy framework for partnership in the conduct of independent system-wide evaluations of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (see resolution 68/229). An interim coordination mechanism was created comprising the Joint Inspection Unit, the United Nations Evaluation Group, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. In adopting the policy, the General Assembly decided to commission two pilot evaluations: "Meta-evaluation and synthesis of United Nations Development Assistance Framework evaluations, with a particular focus on poverty eradication", and "Evaluation of the contribution of the United Nations development system to strengthening national capacities for statistical analysis and data collection". In late 2014, the independent Evaluation Office was invited to join the interim coordination mechanism and contributed to the overall guidance.

D. Supporting joint evaluations and United Nations Development Assistance Framework evaluations

56. In 2014, a number of innovations were implemented through the process of disseminating and promoting the use of the joint evaluation on joint programmes on gender equality, commissioned by UN-Women, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund, in partnership with the Governments of Norway and Spain. For the first time, an informal joint Executive Board session of UN-Women, UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA was organized and the findings of the evaluation were presented collectively by the Directors of the evaluation offices of the four United Nations entities. An innovative approach was also followed in developing a joint management response that was collectively presented as well during the joint informal board session by senior managers of the four United Nations entities.

57. The review on gender equality is the first exercise of its kind assessing performance on gender mainstreaming and results on gender equality across the United Nations system. Given the key partners for the review, which include UN-Women, the United Nations Evaluation Group and EvalPartners, and the wide range of stakeholders involved in the process, the final reports will allow for a collective discussion on lessons learned, good practices, challenges and opportunities to improve performance and results on gender equality.

58. Within the framework of regional evaluation groups, UN-Women provided technical and advisory services to eight United Nations Development Assistance Framework evaluations in regions in Asia and the Pacific, the Americas and the Caribbean and Eastern and Southern Africa.

E. Gender equality evaluation portal

59. The gender equality evaluation portal continued to be a resource for UN-Women stakeholders around the world linking evaluative evidence with the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action. The website provides access to 411 evaluation reports, an increase of 17 per cent from 2013, with the aim of sharing evaluative evidence on what works and what does not work for achieving gender equality. While 70 per cent of the reports are from the United Nations system, 30 per cent of the reports are from academia, foundations, bilateral institutions, intergovernmental mechanisms and multilateral development banks. In 2014, the website received almost 2,100 visitors. To enhance the use of the knowledge and evidence in those 411 evaluation reports, the review on gender equality is synthesizing their lessons learned and good practices.

IV. Supporting national and regional gender-responsive evaluation capacities

A. Strengthening an enabling environment for evaluation by declaring 2015 the International Year of Evaluation

60. EvalPartners, the global partnership for national evaluation capacity development co-led by UN-Women and the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation, is a wide and diverse partnership that works to advocate for environments that enable good quality and gender-responsive evaluations at the international, regional and national levels. In 2014, EvalPartners developed a strategy to declare and commemorate 2015 as the International Year of Evaluation, with the aim of enhancing the demand and use of evaluation in policymaking. The Secretary-General, in his speech at the United Nations Evaluation Group event on 9 March 2015 in New York, welcomed the designation of 2015 as the International Year of Evaluation, and stated that evaluation everywhere, and at every level, would play a key role in implementing the new development agenda, and everyone shared a responsibility to strengthen that important function. In that context, the United Nations Evaluation Group held three high-level meetings in Bangkok and New York, where parliamentarians also emphasized the need to strengthen an evaluation culture. In 2015, at least 35 events are scheduled to commemorate the International Year of Evaluation, which will culminate with a global event at the Parliament of Nepal.

61. In addition, the General Assembly passed resolution 69/237 on building capacity for the evaluation of development activities at the country level on 19 December 2014. The resolution reiterates the importance of building national capacity for the evaluation of development activities and invites the entities of the United Nations development system, with the collaboration of national and international stakeholders, to support, upon request, efforts to further strengthen the capacity of Member States for evaluation, in accordance with their national policies and priorities, while acknowledging the International Year of Evaluation.

62. With the aim of strengthening national demand and use of evaluation in policymaking, parliamentarians have been invited to engage in strengthening an enabling environment for evaluation. Under the leadership of EvalPartners and UN-Women, and with the support of UNDP and the African Development Bank, selected parliamentarians from all over the world met and collectively acknowledged their role in evidence-based policymaking, and decided to launch a global parliamentarians forum for development evaluation at the EvalPartners Global Evaluation Week to be organized at the Parliament of Nepal in 2015. EvalPartners, UN-Women and the African Development Bank also played an important role in supporting the establishment of an African parliamentarians network for development evaluation and women's parliamentarians group for evaluation in the Arab States region.

63. In that context, with support from EvalPartners and UN-Women, parliamentarians are becoming strong advocates for gender-responsive evaluation. UN-Women participation ensured the inclusion of gender equality perspectives in all the three existing regional Parliamentarians Forums for Evaluation in South Asia, Africa and Arab States.

64. With the purpose of providing guidance on ways to integrate gender equality issues into national evaluation policies and systems, the new guidance entitled "National evaluation policies for sustainable and equitable development: how to integrate gender equality and social equity in national evaluation policies and systems"[4] was published by EvalPartners, UN-Women and the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation, in partnership with the United Nations Evaluation Group. The document guided the deliberations of the regional consultation on national evaluation policies organized by the Parliamentarians Forum on Development Evaluation in South Asia in partnership with EvalPartners and UN-Women. Parliamentarians from all eight South Asian countries developed work plans to establish gender-responsive national evaluation policies.

B. Strengthening institutional capacities to demand, manage and use evaluations

65. Voluntary organizations for professional evaluation are strategic stakeholders in strengthening locally led demand, supply and use of evaluation in policymaking. After the success of the first round of the voluntary organizations for professional evaluation peer-to-peer mutual support programme, EvalPartners launched a second round in 2014. The programme enabled 23 national and 4 regional voluntary organizations for professional evaluation to strengthen their institutional capacities by sharing experiences and supporting each other. For example, the African Evaluation Association and the Network for Monitoring, Evaluation and Systematization in Latin America and the Caribbean worked together to strengthen context-relevant approaches to evaluation.

66. With the aim of stimulating innovative ideas to strengthen the demand, supply and use of gender-responsive evaluations, EvalPartners, under the leadership of UN-Women, launched an "innovation challenge". One result was a strategy, developed by the Network for Monitoring, Evaluation and Systematization in Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Evaluation Society, to integrate gender into the voluntary organizations for professional evaluation. Last but not least, UN-Women, in collaboration with EvalPartners, the International Organization for Cooperation in Evaluation and the Network for Monitoring, Evaluation and Systematization in Latin America and the Caribbean, provided technical support to strengthen the gender-responsive evaluation capacity of national evaluation systems in Colombia, Mexico and Peru.

C. Strengthening individual capacities of evaluators to conduct credible and useful gender-responsive evaluations

67. With the aim of strengthening the technical capacities of individual evaluators in a cost-effective manner, EvalPartners facilitated global learning on evaluation by enhancing the web portal "My M&E", a user-friendly knowledge management system for strengthening national evaluation capacity, which has quickly become a global hub for national evaluation capacities.

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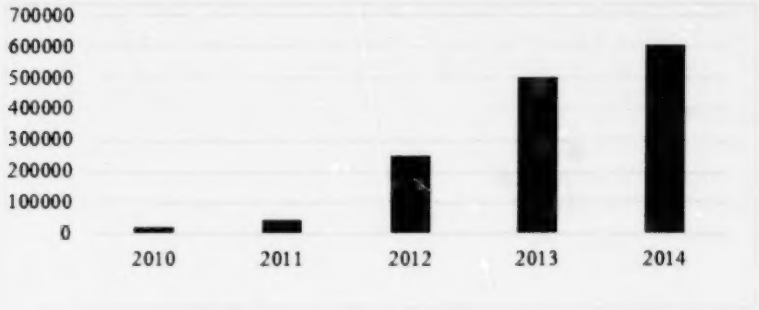
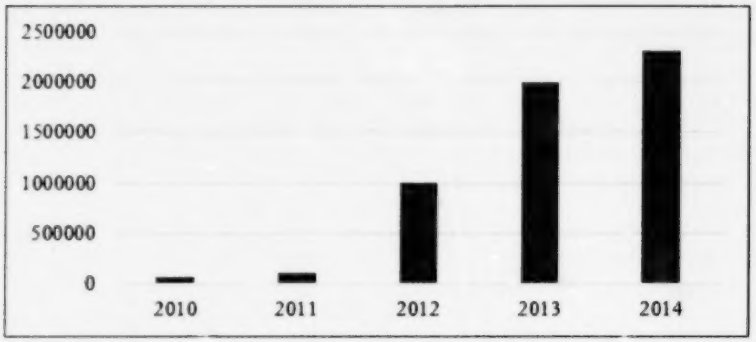
[4] Available from http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.afrea.org/resource/resmgr/books/NationalEvaluationPolicies_w.pdf.

Figure 7
Total cumulative number of visitors to EvalPartners "MyM&E" platform



Source: MyM&E statistics, December 2014.

Figure 8
Total cumulative number of page downloads of EvalPartners "MyM&E" platform



Source: MyM&E statistics, December 2014.

68. The total cumulative number of visitors has increased from 22,000 in 2010 to 605,000 in 2014, with visitors from more than 168 countries (see figure 7). Page downloads increased from 76,000 pages in 2010 to 2,300,000 in 2014 (see figure 8).

69. Those results have been reached thanks to the strategic and effective use of new technologies, in particular the launch of a massive open online course on development evaluation in late 2012. As at the end of 2014, the course reached a cumulative total of 21,000 registered participants from 178 countries. While the course was designed mainly for evaluators in developing countries, its quality also attracted evaluators from developed countries: 70 per cent are from developing countries, while 30 per cent are from developed countries. Despite concerns regarding the low speed of Internet connectivity in Africa, the biggest group of participants is from that region: 34 per cent from Africa, 30 per cent from the Americas, 17 per cent from Europe, 16 per cent from Asia and 3 per cent from Oceania.

70. In terms of organizational affiliation, participants work in different types of organizations: 28 per cent are from civil society organizations, 19 per cent from

governments, 17 per cent from United Nations entities, 16 per cent from the private sector, 11 per cent from universities and the remaining 9 per cent are listed as "others".

71. The course proved to be very cost-effective. While the courses are free for the participants, the total cost for EvalPartners is approximately $5 per participant. However, that cost includes the up-front cost for the development of the e-learning platform. The annual cost to run the entire programme, excluding the up-front cost, is $3 per participant.

D. EvalGender, a new partnership to strengthen the demand, supply and use of gender-responsive evaluations

72. As the world transitions into the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, with an increased emphasis on gender equality and a new resolution adopted by the General Assembly reaffirming the importance of strengthening national evaluation capacity (resolution 69/237), there is an unprecedented opportunity to better inform the post-2015 development agenda at the global, regional and national levels with credible gender-responsive evaluative evidence.

73. Given the important challenge to strengthen national capacities to evaluate gender-equality policies and programmes, in late 2014 UN-Women and EvalPartners sent out a call for expressions of interest to create EvalGender, a new global partnership dedicated to contribute to the achievement of gender equality by engendering development policies through gender-responsive evaluation.

74. Within a few months, 33 partners, including 16 United Nations agencies and two multilateral banks, joined the initiative to coordinate and maximize efforts in strengthening gender-responsive evaluation and agreed to officially launch the initiative at the Global Evaluation Week scheduled in 2015 at the Parliament of Nepal.

V. The 2015 independent Evaluation Office programme of work

75. The 2015 independent Evaluation Office programme of work is aligned with the evaluation policy and contributes to the UN-Women strategic plan. It is based on the evaluation strategic plan for 2014-2017 and the corporate evaluation plan for 2014-2017. In line with its strategic planning frameworks, the independent Evaluation Office will continue to work on the four key results areas outlined below.

A. Implementation of effective corporate evaluation systems

76. In 2015, the independent Evaluation Office will undertake two major corporate evaluations: (a) evaluation of UN-Women normative support work and its operational linkages in collaboration with the Inspection and Evaluation Division of the Office of Internal Oversight Services and (b) evaluation of the contribution by UN-Women to the United Nations system coordination on gender equality and women's empowerment. A meta-analysis of corporate and decentralized evaluations

managed by UN-Women in 2014 will also be conducted. In addition, the second and third component of the review on gender equality will be finalized. To enhance learning from corporate evaluations, the independent Evaluation Office will put strong emphasis on facilitating the use of corporate evaluations by exploring innovative ways in communicating evaluation findings to different UN-Women and external audiences, while continuing to explore and develop innovative and gender-responsive evaluation methodologies.

B. Implementation of effective decentralized evaluation systems

77. The independent Evaluation Office will continue to support strengthening decentralized evaluation culture and practice. The internal evaluation capacities will be strengthened by launching, in collaboration with the human resource department and the Training Centre of UN-Women, an evaluation professionalization programme that includes the UN-Women evaluation handbook entitled *How to Manage Gender-Responsive Evaluation: Evaluation Handbook*,[5] an online e-learning course based on the *Handbook* and a coaching programme to ensure hands-on learning. The independent Evaluation Office will also continue implementing quality assurance mechanisms including the global evaluation oversight system, the Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis system and evaluation quality standards for decentralized evaluations. Knowledge management systems for evaluation will be maintained, including the UN-Women evaluation community of practice, the Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use system and the repository of gender-equality evaluations. The independent Evaluation Office will develop a publicly accessible gender equality and evaluation roster database to facilitate identification of qualified external evaluation consultants in gender-responsive evaluation.

C. Promotion of United Nations coordination on gender-responsive evaluation

78. UN-Women will continue to provide leadership and actively participate in the United Nations Evaluation Group and regional United Nations evaluation groups. The Director of the independent Evaluation Office commenced responsibilities as Chair of the United Nations Evaluation Group in March 2015. That will create new opportunities to promote gender-responsive evaluation within United Nations entities. The independent Evaluation Office will continue to take part in task forces to ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed across inter-agency evaluation work. In particular, the independent Evaluation Office will lead the development of an e-learning course on integrating gender equality in evaluation. The independent Evaluation Office will contribute to the system-wide accountability frameworks on gender equality by supporting the reporting of United Nations entities on the evaluation indicator of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and providing help-desk facility and training.

[5] Available from unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/4/un-women-evaluation-handbook-how-to-manage-gender-responsive-evaluation.

D. Strengthening of national evaluation capacities for gender-responsive evaluation systems

79. UN-Women will continue to support national gender-responsive evaluation capacity development through EvalPartners and EvalGender, and to provide targeted support to national evaluation systems. The independent Evaluation Office will strategically use its role as Co-Chair of EvalPartners to advocate for gender-responsive evaluation in events related to the 2015 International Year of Evaluation at global, regional and national levels. It will continue to lead EvalPartners task forces on gender-responsive evaluation and to support South-South cooperation among the regional voluntary organizations for professional evaluation. The independent Evaluation Office will also lead the official launch of EvalGender.

E. Approved budget for the 2015 independent Evaluation Office programme of work

80. The total independent Evaluation Office budget for 2015 is $4,691,823. The budget for core programmable resources is $3,726,727, including the costs of the regional evaluation specialists. The estimate includes staff contracts and workplan categories: company contracts for evaluation studies in 2015; office operational costs; support to decentralized evaluation systems; support to work on United Nations coordination on gender-responsive evaluation; and national evaluation capacity development on gender-responsive evaluation. In addition to core programmable resources, the salaries of five staff members are covered by the institutional budget, amounting to $965,096.

81. The independent Evaluation Office also received the following cost-sharing funds: $537,927 from Switzerland to strengthen the internal evaluation function, and $249,665 from Finland and $363,885 from the United States Agency for International Development to support the EvalPartners initiative.

Annex I

Evaluations completed in 2014

Region	*Office division*	*Title of programme evaluated*	*Rating*
Americas and the Caribbean	Country office for Brazil	National implementation support plan in policies for women	Very good
	Regional Office for Americas and the Caribbean (Panama)	Participación política de las mujeres en América Latina y el Caribe	Very good
Asia and the Pacific	Multi-country office for the Pacific (Fiji)	Pacific Regional Facility Fund for Ending Violence against Women	Very good
	Multi-country office for India, Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka	Empowering women in rural and informal settings through capacity development	Very good
	Multi-country office for India, Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka	UN-Women Anti-Human Trafficking Programme	Very good
	Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (Thailand)	Mid-term review of the "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) South-East Asia Programme II"	Satisfactory
	Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (Thailand)	Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) regional mechanisms project to protect the human rights of women and girls in South-East Asia 2010-2014	Satisfactory
Arab States	Country office for Jordan	Empowering youth to advocate for women's human rights through volunteerism	Good
	Multi-country office for the Maghreb (Morocco)	Action du Bureau Multi-pays d'ONU-Femmes Maghreb dans le domaine de la lutte contre les violences à l'égard des femmes et des filles	Satisfactory
Europe and Central Asia	Country office for Georgia	Mid-term review of the UN-Women project "Women for equality, peace and development (WEPD) II"	Satisfactory
Eastern and Southern Africa	Country office for the Sudan	UN-Women Sudan Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) Programme: "Consolidating efforts that contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment in Sudan"	Very good
	Country office for the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Projet d'appui à la législation sensible au genre et promotion du leadership féminin à l'est de la République démocratique du Congo	Good

Region	*Office division*	*Title of programme evaluated*	*Rating*
	Country office for Ethiopia	Joint UN-Women/UNFPA programme on ending violence against women	Good
	Country office for Kenya	Government of Kenya/United Nations Joint Programme on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment	Good
	Multi-country office for Southern Africa (South Africa)	Pro poor governance, gender equality and women's empowerment from a human resources perspective in Namibia	Satisfactory
	Multi-country office for Southern Africa (South Africa)	Women entrepreneurs project in South Africa	Satisfactory
Western and Central Africa	Country office for Côte d'Ivoire	Contribution de l'ONU-Femmes dans l'atteinte des résultats de développement de la Côte d'Ivoire	Good
Independent Evaluation Office	Independent Evaluation Office	UN-Women contribution to women's economic empowerment	Very good
Headquarters division	Policy Division	European Commission/UN-Women "Supporting gender equality in the context of HIV/AIDS"	Very good
	Policy Division	Action to promote the legal empowerment of women in the context of HIV and AIDS	Very good
	Programme Support Division	Mid-term evaluation report on "Strengthening responses to create wealth and reduce poverty for women in cross-border trade (WICBT) in Africa"	Good

Annex II

Evaluation in funds managed by UN-Women

United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women

1. The United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women is a multilateral grant-making mechanism established in 1996 pursuant to General Assembly resolution 50/166. The Fund is administered by UN-Women on behalf of the United Nations system. The Trust Fund supports local, national, regional and cross-regional programmes to prevent and respond to all forms of violence against women and girls. It provides funding for sustainable, innovative and catalytic multi-year programmes implemented by civil society organizations, national and local governments and United Nations country teams.

2. In 2014, 15 grantees planned and budgeted for final external evaluations. The total amount budgeted for evaluation was $711,594 and had been built into each grantees' programmatic budget awarded by the Trust Fund since the inception of the grant. Out of 15 planned project evaluations, 14 evaluations have been completed and one postponed to 2015.

3. Grantees managed their own external evaluations, with the Trust Fund secretariat and UN-Women regional and country offices providing oversight, as well as technical support upon request. In 2014, the Trust Fund continued to have one staff member as the monitoring and evaluation specialist to provide technical support to grantees. In addition, UN-Women regional office focal points provided technical feedback on draft terms of reference and evaluation reports.

4. The grant management system that was launched in 2013 and fully implemented in 2014 provided more systematic monitoring data for the final evaluations. In addition, the grantees were able to access the Trust Fund evaluation guidelines in the system. The Trust Fund decided to enhance the grant management system to include a full module on evaluation to allow online submission and review of evaluation reports. That system will be implemented in 2015.

5. It continued to be challenging at the level of the Trust Fund secretariat to aggregate the data from the grantee project evaluation reports and to do systematic data analysis across all grantee projects. To address that challenge, the future Trust Fund strategy and results framework for 2015-2020 will include a set of common indicators that will be integrated into relevant projects to provide a standardized way of collecting data.

6. As in previous years, to enhance the capacities of recently funded grantees, the Trust Fund convened a five-day capacity development workshop for 17 grantee organizations.

Fund for Gender Equality

1. Launched in 2009, the Fund for Gender Equality is the organization's leading global grant-making mechanism and multi-donor Fund dedicated to civil society organization programming on women's political and economic empowerment. The

Fund sustains, supports and strengthens the capacities of civil society organizations to implement high-impact and multi-stakeholder programmes that translate law and policy commitments into tangible services to women and girls, men and boys around the world, especially in the most excluded and marginalized communities.

2. In 2014, the grantees of the Fund budgeted $260,408 for conducting evaluations. Of 14 evaluations planned, 8 were completed and 6 were started and will be completed in 2015. Five monitoring and reporting specialists deployed in the field provided technical assistance and support to the grantees conducting evaluation processes.

3. Following the recommendations of the audit to move to a risk-based monitoring system, and in consultation with the UN-Women independent Evaluation Office, the Fund decided to strategically plan for evaluations, with the aim of increasing efficiency and quality.

4. In 2014, the Fund developed the capacities of the grantees through technical guidance and support throughout the evaluation processes, including through the provision of technical advice, the development of evaluation terms of reference and the sharing of relevant materials, in addition to the strengthening of the capacities of the Fund's monitoring and reporting specialists.

United Nations UNW/2015/6*

Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

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30 June-2 July 2015
Item 2 of the provisional agenda**
Strategic plan

Progress made on the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women strategic plan, 2014-2017, including operational activities in 2014

Report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director

Summary

The progress report of the Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) on the strategic plan, 2014-2017, is presented for the consideration of the Executive Board, in accordance with paragraph 6 of its decision 2013/5, and includes a report on operational activities in 2014, as requested by the Board in its decision 2014/1.

The Executive Board may wish to welcome the report and the achievements made in the implementation of the strategic plan, including its improved results reporting, stress the urgency of increased funding for UN-Women so as to enable the Entity to fully and effectively implement the strategic plan, 2014-2017 and decide to transmit the report to the Economic and Social Council.

* Reissued for technical reasons on 22 June 2015.
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I. Introduction

1. The present report is the first report on the progress made on the implementation of the strategic plan, 2014-2017, of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). It describes the Entity's response to General Assembly resolution 67/226 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. In the resolution, the General Assembly reiterated the mandate of UN-Women as regards leading the United Nations system and leveraging its potential for gender equality and the empowerment of women. It also expressed support for UN-Women efforts to further strengthen the links between its operational, normative and coordination roles.

2. The realization of gender equality, women's rights and women's empowerment is the imperative of our time. It has been 15 years since the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals and 20 years since the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, but progress remains unacceptably slow and no country has achieved gender equality. This was the defining reality for UN-Women as it led the global effort for gender equality in 2014 and in its preparations for events in 2015, rallying partners and supporters and reaching out to constituencies who had yet to be convinced. 2014 also saw UN-Women fully assume the mantle of global advocacy leadership, with campaigns that caught the world's attention and continue to stimulate the global solidarity movement for gender equality and the empowerment of women, in pursuit of a gender-equal world by 2030.

3. Events in 2014 reminded the world of how much is yet to be achieved. The relevance and urgency of the Entity's mandate was consistently reinforced by realities on the ground, whether in conflicts that challenged every human right of women and girls, or in countries where women were at the forefront in combatting Ebola and its consequences, or demonstrated by the continuing global pandemic of violence against women and girls. Commitments, policies and strategies for combating these problems exist, but are not implemented effectively enough and with the necessary investment.

4. In 2014, UN-Women again demonstrated its ever-growing ability to achieve results and increasingly enjoyed the confidence of its partners as a trustworthy steward of resources and a results-oriented and effective partner for change at the global, regional and country levels. Results in 2014 included the success of the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the outcome of which helped set the context for the pivotal role of UN-Women as regards the work of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals and its endorsement of a stand-alone goal on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. Another milestone was the positive assessment by the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network of UN-Women, which highlighted the strong mandate of the Entity, the high relevance of its programmes to their local context and its success to date in building the organization.

5. UN-Women also achieved some remarkable results through its operational presence, delivering $124.8 m in country programmes, for an overall implementation rate of budgeted activities of 82 per cent,[1] reflecting continued high

[1] There has been a change in the basis for calculating the expenditure for 2014, wherein overall programme expenditure for 2014 has been reduced by $7.8 million, representing the elimination of support costs. Support costs were not eliminated from the programme expenditure total of $133 million reported for the financial year 2013 (see UNW/2014/2, para. 4).

operational performance, the maturation of programme initiatives from the strategic plan cycle for 2011-2013 and the growing trust partners are putting in the organization. 2014 also saw UN-Women increasingly link normative, operational and coordination roles in practice. The unprecedented scale of preparations and support to Member States for the commemoration, review and assessment of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action saw many field offices play a crucial role in supporting countries to prepare reports, participate in regional reviews and assess progress to date. At the country level, progress on the normative framework is also being harnessed by field offices as a basis for operational engagement with governments, civil society and other partners, as evidenced by the significant operational work in follow-up to the agreed conclusions adopted by the Commission on the Status of Women at its fifty-seventh session.

II. Global and normative context

6. 2014 witnessed a remarkable expansion of the global normative framework of the United Nations system and in that context, UN-Women investment of expertise, a strengthened knowledge base and extensive alliance- and partnership-building were key strategic components in facilitating that progress. UN-Women integrated its field-based operational expertise, as well as its system-wide coordination capacities, with its normative support function, in order to achieve stronger results for women and girls. UN-Women also exercised its convening power to work with governments, including national parliaments, ministries for gender equality and other relevant ministries, as well as civil society, to strengthen the consensus on gender equality. Information contained in this section includes reporting on impact area 6 of the strategic plan, 2014-2017.[2]

7. The Commission on the Status of Women completed the only comprehensive intergovernmental consideration of the situation of women and girls in regard to each of the Millennium Development Goals and adopted agreed conclusions on the challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls (see E/2014/27-E/CN.6/2014/15, chap. I). UN-Women efforts were instrumental in ensuring that agreement was reached on the assessment and on strategic action to be taken to overcome the gaps.

8. UN-Women's normative support created a solid basis for successful deliberations and negotiations on gender equality at the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly. As a result, the normative framework was further strengthened as regards ending violence against women and girls, eliminating female genital mutilation, and addressing trafficking in women and girls (see reports of the Secretary-General A/69/222, A/69/211 and A/69/224 and General Assembly resolutions 69/147, 69/148 and 69/149). The General Assembly resolution on the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women (resolution 69/151) encouraged UN-Women activities in support of the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the Assembly renewed the mandate for the *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development* in its resolution 69/236.

[2] Indicator data for impact area 6 is contained in the data companion, which will be made available on the webpage of the Executive Board of UN-Women (www.unwomen.org/en/executive-board).

9. UN-Women continued its active engagement in the context of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and at the twentieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention, made the substantive case for the linkage between gender equality and climate action. The co-chairs' draft elements for a new climate agreement recognize gender perspectives in the preamble and reflect such perspectives in a number of options in the sections on adaptation, capacity-building and finance. UN-Women supported the adoption of the Lima work programme on gender (see FCCC/CP/2014/10/Add.3, decision 18/CP.20), which sets out a two-year work programme, for the secretariat of the Framework Convention and the parties thereto, as regards promoting gender balance and achieving gender-responsive climate policy. UN-Women supported governments in the preparation for the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States. The outcome of that Conference outlined the key actions to be taken in support of gender equality and confirmed the crucial role of gender equality and women's empowerment in the sustainable development of small island developing States (see General Assembly resolution 69/15, annex).

10. Another important milestone was collaboration with the Group of 77 and China in organizing its first international meeting on women's rights, ahead of its Summit of Heads of State and Government, held in June 2014, which resulted in a declaration in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Group (see A/68/948, annex). UN-Women also participated in the fifth ministerial conference on women's role in the development of Organization of Islamic Cooperation member States, held in Baku, in October 2014, which resulted in a declaration.

11. UN-Women advocated to ensure that gender equality and the empowerment of women remained central to the post-2015 development agenda, by supporting the inclusion of a stand-alone goal and gender-sensitive targets in the sustainable development goals, pursued similar advocacy as regards the intergovernmental process in preparation for the third International Conference on Financing for Development. UN-Women supported the deliberations of Member States with background documents and technical clarifications on key issues and concepts.

12. The review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of its adoption was a key priority in 2014 and early 2015. Through a comprehensive programme of activities, UN-Women worked towards renewing the political impetus around gender equality and women's empowerment, strengthening the advocacy and evidence base, enhancing social and resource mobilization and building social and political movements, and revitalizing public engagement. 167 Member States submitted national reports on progress made in this regard. At its fifty-ninth session, in 2015, the Commission on the Status of Women adopted a political declaration pledging to take further concrete action for the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the Beijing Declaration Platform for Action (see E/2015/27-E/CN.6/2015/10, resolution 59/1). UN-Women also co-organized more than 40 thematic events on the critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action in collaboration with key partners, including Member States, the United Nations system, the private sector and civil society organizations.

13. UN-Women supported the implementation by States of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, including through the provision of support for capacity development for government officials, gender equality advocates and other stakeholders as regards the Convention and women's

human rights. Support was provided to States parties for reporting to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, in preparing for dialogue with the Committee and for following up to concluding observations. Support was also provided for the preparation of civil society shadow reports, as well as for reports submitted to the Committee by United Nations country teams. UN-Women supported the Committee in its elaboration of general recommendations.

14. UN-Women supported the universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council, including through supporting the preparation of Member State reports, contributing to country team reports and supporting the implementation of recommendations. The Entity collaborated with other mechanisms of the Human Rights Council, including the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice; the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples; the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences; and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967. UN-Women continued to ensure that all commissions of inquiry of the United Nations have the required gender expertise to fulfil their mandates. During 2014, UN-Women deployed experts to commissions of inquiry mandated by the Human Rights Council on the Syrian Arab Republic (see Human Rights Council resolution S-17/1), the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (see resolution 22/13), Eritrea (see resolution 26/24) and on the Gaza Conflict (see resolution S-21/1) as well as a commission of inquiry on the Central African Republic (mandated by the Security Council in its resolution 2127 (2013)), and a fact-finding mission to Iraq.

III. Programme results

A. Overview

15. UN-Women programme activities are directed at ensuring that progress in the global normative framework is translated into results that have a positive impact on the lives of women and girls. To that end, UN-Women delivered programme support in 86 countries in 2014, with its country programmes incorporating a total of 513 country programme outcomes, supported by 1,072 planned outputs and 3,596 activities.[3]

16. 2014 was the first year of implementation of the strategic plan and all offices developed new programmes, starting in 2014, to operationalize the new plan. Based on reporting at the country level, UN-Women saw progress across almost all outcome indicators in the strategic plan.[4] In some cases, the available data indicate that there is an advanced level of progress against outcome indicators and the targets for those indicators will be reviewed within the context of the midterm review of the strategic plan.

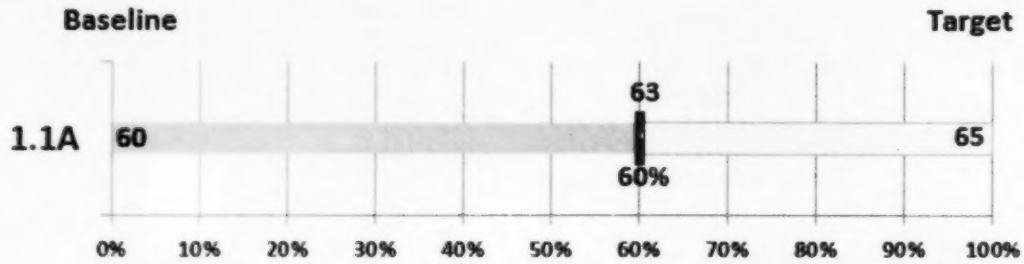
[3] Detailed information on programme profiles, results and expenditures is available from the 2014 data companion.

[4] Further details on indicators, including output indicators, are available in the data companion.

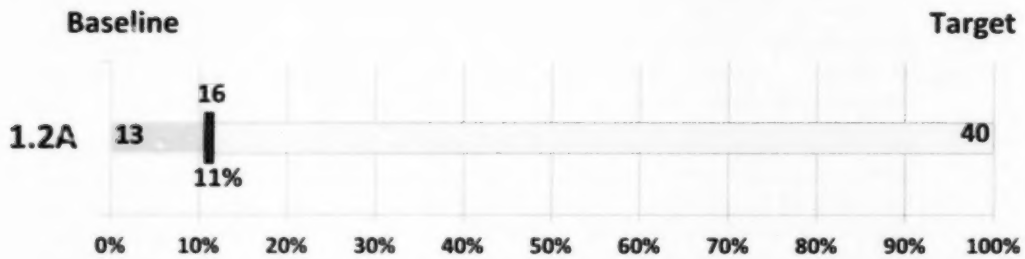
B. Women's leadership and participation

17. Decision-making bodies, in governments, parliaments and local councils, remain dominated by men. Globally, 1 in 5 national parliamentarians are women and women serve as head of State or government in just 19 countries. Around the world, legislation and policies continue to be negotiated, for the most part, by male decision makers, disregarding the experiences, needs and interests of women. UN-Women is working to address this imbalance by supporting legislative and constitutional reform, supporting gender responsive measures that promote women's leadership and participation and supporting gender equality advocates to influence change. In 2014, reporting at the country level indicates that the Entity saw progress across all of the outcome indicators in the strategic plan as regards the targets for the period 2014-2017, ranging from 11 per cent to 60 per cent (see figure I).

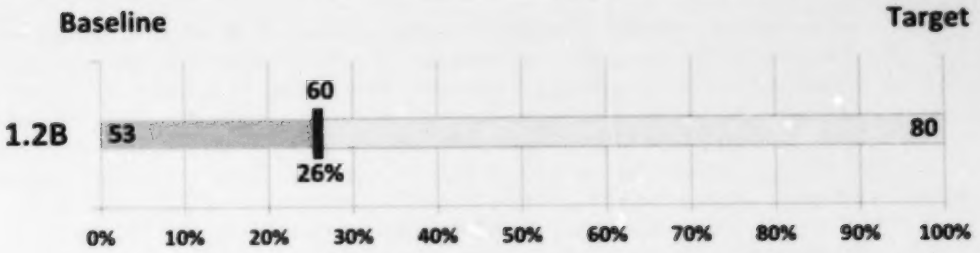
Figure I
Progress on outcome indicators for impact area 1



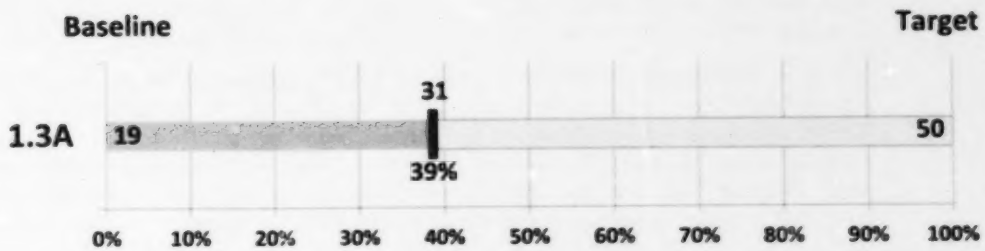
1.1A : Number of countries with constitutional provisions that specifically promote women's participation in decision-making



1.2A: Number of countries with gender balance (greater than 40 per cent of women) in boards of electoral management bodies



1.2B: Number of countries with gender equality committees in parliament



1.3A: Number of countries with national dialogues and policies influenced by gender equality advocates

18. In 46 countries, UN-Women worked on the reform and adoption of gender responsive constitutions, legal frameworks and policies through advocacy, knowledge-sharing and technical support to constitutional drafting bodies, legislative drafting committees and electoral management bodies. UN-Women also strengthened a cadre of aspiring women leaders through capacity-building and skills development, strengthened gender-sensitive media reporting and outreach and promoted safe environments through civil society monitoring strategies to increase women's electoral participation.

19. In the United Republic of Tanzania, gains in terms of gender equality in the revised draft constitution are the result of UN-Women support to the creation of the "Women for the Constitution" coalition (*Wanawake Na Katiba*) and their successful advocacy, both to the grass roots and to Parliament. Concluding a two-year process, the final draft of the constitution was approved to go to referendum and incorporates specific provisions to advance gender equality and women's empowerment, including a provision for 50 per cent representation of women in parliament. In Tunisia, UN-Women successfully advocated for the inclusion of gender equality in the new Constitution through building the capacities of non-governmental organizations to conduct outreach and advocacy and leading discussions among parliamentarians and decision makers in partnership with national groups. The Tunisian Constitution, adopted in 2014, is now considered among the strongest in the Arab region with regard to women's human rights.

20. In 42 countries, UN-Women advocated for gender-responsive measures to promote women's leadership and participation in politics through supporting parliaments to be more gender-responsive and enhancing their capacity to deliver

gender-sensitive legislation; supported parliamentarians to be effective leaders and champions of gender equality; and built the capacities of political parties to be more gender-responsive by promoting women's participation. In Malawi, UN-Women facilitated the organization of training for all female candidates for parliament (256 individuals) and local councils (408 individuals) across the country and for the first time, Malawi had a women-focused "situation room", providing regular information with a group of pro bono lawyers to support a referral mechanism in cases of violence and discrimination. In the Plurinational State of Bolivia, UN-Women, in coordination with the United Nations Development Programme, advocated for political parties to comply with the new regulations on gender parity requiring the alternation of male and female candidates on electoral lists to contest the 2014 national elections. Compliance with the law resulted in the State reaching parity (50.8 per cent) in the number of women elected to the House of Representatives, compared with less than 30 per cent of women representatives in the past.

21. UN-Women also collaborated with the Inter-Parliamentary Union, including through high-level participation in the 131st Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, during the general debate on the theme "Achieving gender equality, ending violence against women". The outcome document of the general debate highlights the need for non-discriminatory comprehensive legislation and the importance of education to transform attitudes so as to end violence against women.

22. UN-Women supported gender equality advocates in 34 countries in their efforts to influence constitutions and policies to increase women's participation. In the Republic of Moldova, 29 mass media organizations signed a public commitment towards balanced representation of the sexes in public and political life, committing to greater visibility of women during elections and using and reporting on sex-disaggregated statistics. In Kenya, the Africa Centre for Transformative and Inclusive Leadership was launched in partnership with Kenyatta University to develop capacities among current and emerging African leaders. During 2014, the Centre trained 337 participants. Participants from Ethiopia have influenced four ministries to establish a shared leadership development centre; in South Sudan, the Government is establishing a National Transformational Leadership Institute; and 28 women parliamentarians from the Federal Parliament of Somalia established a parliamentary caucus after the training.

Fund for Gender Equality

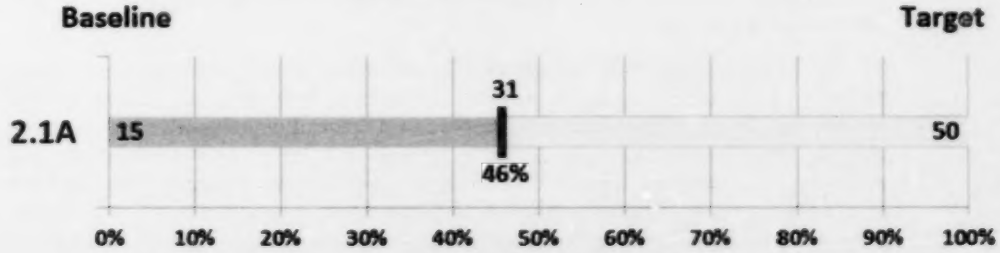
The Fund for Gender Equality is the Entity's grant-making mechanism and multi-donor fund dedicated to the economic and political empowerment of women. It sustains, supports and strengthens the capacities of civil society organizations to implement programmes translating policy commitments into tangible results for women and girls around the world, especially for those who are most excluded and marginalized. In 2014, 66 active programmes were implemented, with a total funding commitment of $43 million.

Results in the political participation area include a nationwide campaign conducted by Cotidiano Mujer, a grantee in Uruguay, which contributed to an increase in the number of female senators from two to nine and an increase in the proportion of female ministers from 15 per cent to 40 per cent. In Kenya, thanks to the community mobilization and support provided by the grantee Grassroots Organizations Operating Together in Sisterhood (GROOTS) Kenya, the number of women elected and appointed in three counties saw a six-fold increase, from 32 in 2013 to 192 in 2014. The Fund launched its third grant-making cycle in March 2015, calling for proposals to strengthen the role of civil society organizations in accelerating the implementation of gender equality commitments in the context of the new sustainable development goals.

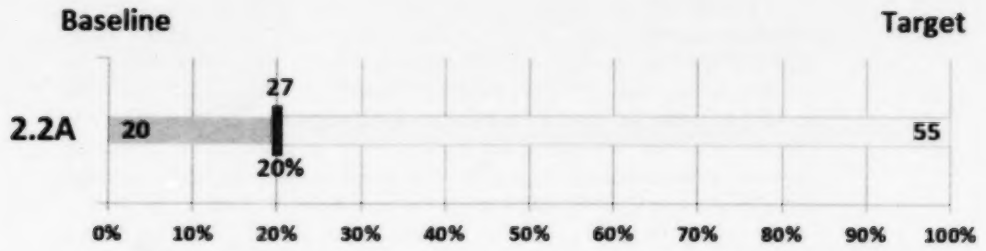
C. Increased access for women to economic empowerment opportunities

23. Women are the link between growth and development: money in the hands of women is spent on the family, for example on the health and education of children, thereby breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty. However, currently, up to 95 per cent of women's employment is in the informal sector, in jobs that are unprotected by labour laws and lack social protection. In order to bridge the gap between rising economic and ingrained social inequalities, in 2014 UN-Women worked with policymakers, economic institutions and with women themselves, in 76 countries. During 2014, the Entity's work on economic empowerment was also subject to an independent corporate evaluation, which will be presented to the Executive Board at its annual session of 2015. In 2014, reporting at the country level indicates that UN-Women saw progress across all of the outcome indicators in the strategic plan, as regards the targets for impact area 2 for the period 2014-2017, ranging from 6 per cent to 46 per cent (see figure II).

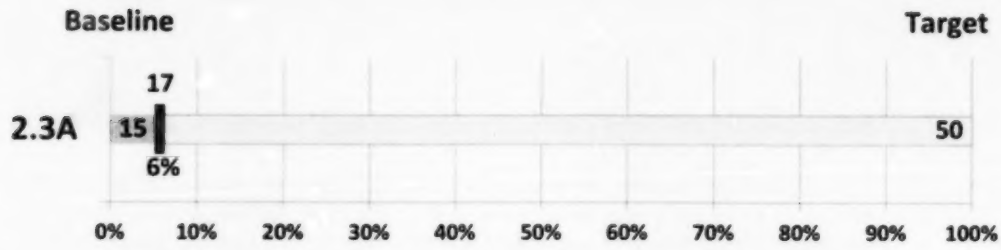
Figure II
Progress on outcome indicators for impact area 2



2.1A : Number of countries supported by UN Women which have a gender-responsive policy framework (including legislation, policies and budgets) in national, local or sectoral planning documents



2.2A: Number of countries that have taken to scale gender-responsive services



2.3A: Number of countries that have economic policies and poverty eradication strategies which are influenced by gender equality advocates

24. In 2014, UN-Women continued to prioritize poverty eradication in line with the quadrennial comprehensive policy review. In 47 countries, UN-Women supported work towards the adoption and implementation of national plans, legislation, policies, strategies, budgets and justice mechanisms to strengthen women's economic empowerment. The Entity was instrumental in advising and supporting the Government of Albania, by contributing to the adoption of a national action plan for women entrepreneurs. In Pakistan, UN-Women advocacy and technical support to local governments on recognizing the economic rights of women home-based workers contributed to over 21,350 informal women workers having improved access to registration services, food security and income-generating opportunities.

25. In 51 countries, UN-Women worked to advance women's sustainable livelihoods through contributions to gender-responsive services and fostering access to and control over means of production and resources. As part of ongoing efforts to integrate women entrepreneurs in existing value chains and raise their productivity and incomes, UN-Women supported a number of diverse capacity-building and procurement efforts in different regions. In South Africa, approximately 7,400 women entrepreneurs participated in the programmatic partnership between UN-Women and The Coca-Cola Company, receiving training on topics such as inventory management and record-keeping, identifying and managing growth opportunities, mentoring relationships and peer support groups.

26. In 28 countries, UN-Women supported the efforts of gender equality advocates to influence economic policies and poverty eradication strategies for promoting women's economic empowerment. In Bangladesh, approximately 1,500 poor women

in areas affected by climate change and environmental degradation improved their economic positions, expanding their productive assets and/or increasing the production of their small businesses, with skills training and livelihood support from UN-Women and others. Approximately half of the beneficiaries generated enough profits to expand their business and increase production, build assets and diversify through purchases of livestock or leasing land.

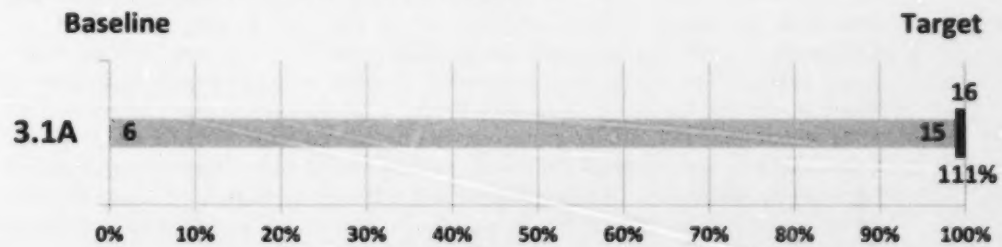
27. In terms of the Entity's role as a global knowledge hub, by the end of 2014, the knowledge gateway for women's economic empowerment (available from empowerwomen.org) had over 20 institutional partners, ranging from international organizations and governments to non-governmental organizations and women's networks. It attracted nearly 100,000 unique visitors and 4,000 registered members, from more than 190 countries. In partnership with Facebook, UN-Women developed iLearn, a mobile-learning platform currently available both on wmpowerwomen.org and on regular mobile phones, which can potentially benefit millions of women entrepreneurs in developing countries.

28. An additional 155 companies signed the Women's Empowerment Principles, committing to business practices that advance gender equality, bringing the total number of signatories to 845. In Cameroon, a partnership with the private sector produced a tool for supporting the private sector in the implementation of the Principles.

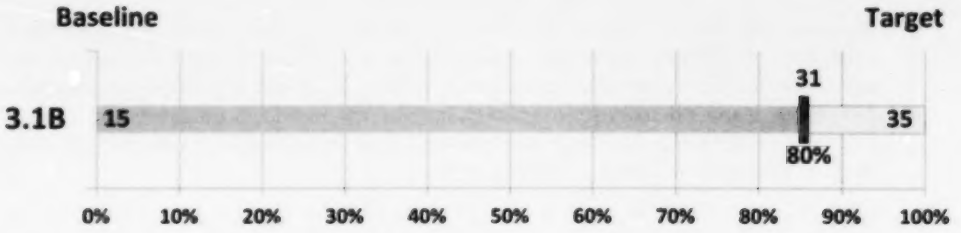
D. Ending violence against women and girls

29. One in three women has been a victim of physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence at some point in her lifetime. UN-Women works to eliminate violence against women and girls by strengthening national capacities to prevent and respond to violence against women, improve the availability and quality of services to address such violence and strengthen United Nations system action on the issue. In 2014, UN-Women provided support to 80 countries in their efforts to end violence against women. In 2014, reporting at the country level indicates that UN-Women saw progress across two of three outcome indicators in the strategic plan and was unable to generate reliable data for the third in 2014 (see figure III). The utility of the third indicator (3.2A) will be reviewed within the context of the mid-term review, as will targets for 3.1A and 3.1B.

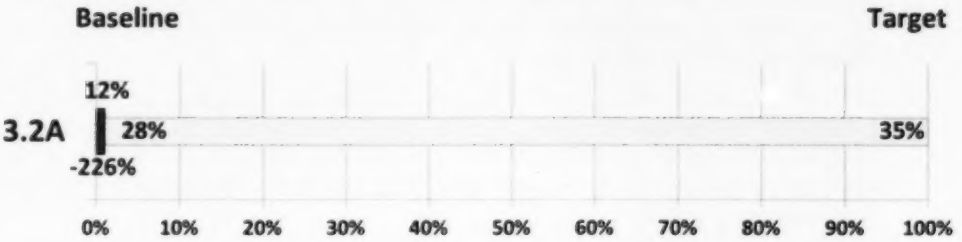
Figure III
Progress on outcome indicators for impact area 3



3.1A: Number of countries that have adopted national action plans and/or strategies on ending violence against women and girls



3.1B: Number of countries that have adopted strengthened legislation addressing all forms of violence against women, informed by voices of women survivors



3.2A: Level of use of multisectoral support services for addressing violence against women by women survivors of violence

30. In 2014, UN-Women worked in 56 countries on the adoption and implementation of laws, policies and strategies in line with international standards and informed by the voices of women survivors of violence to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls. With technical support from UN-Women, Cambodia's second national action plan to prevent violence against women and girls was approved by the Prime Minister. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the new law on preventing and combating violence against women and children was approved by the National Assembly. The new law was developed with contributions from stakeholders through a series of public consultations supported by UN-Women.

31. Three countries in the Pacific endorsed important new legislation for addressing violence against women in 2014, namely, Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu, and another, the Federated States of Micronesia, endorsed a new strategy in that regard, for one district only. UN-Women provided technical and financial support and leveraged the agreed conclusions adopted at the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women to develop political will and evidence-based policy advice. The Entity also contributed to new or strengthened legislation in Morocco, Brazil, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Georgia. In the State of Palestine, UN-Women partnered with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the United Nations Population Fund to improve the national referral system for assisting women survivors of violence and enhance the existing referral protocols, including referral to justice sector institutions and the optimization of a national database system.

32. UN-Women worked in 41 countries to improve the quality, integration and coordination of services for addressing violence against women. In Rwanda, the number of one-stop crisis centres offering holistic multisectoral services to women who have experienced violence was scaled up by UN-Women, from 2 to 11, and the quality of services was improved as a result of capacity-building by a multidisciplinary team. In Afghanistan, with technical support from UN-Women, access for survivors of violence to appropriate protection, legal aid, health care and other services was expanded through the operation of 12 protection centres for women and five family guidance centres, in 14 provinces.

United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women

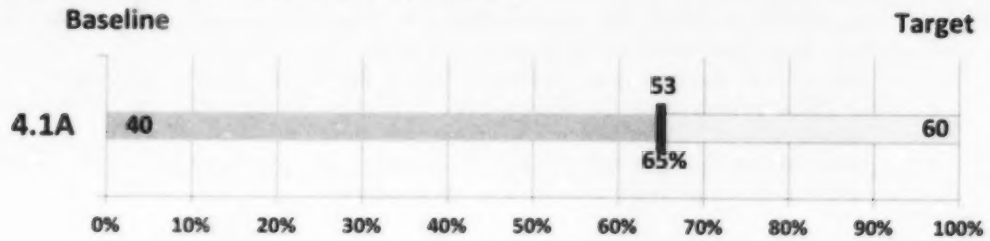
Since its creation in 1996, the United Nations Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women has awarded a total of $103 million to 393 programmes, in 136 countries and territories. In 2014, the Trust Fund awarded $8.3 million in grants to 25 projects, to be implemented in 23 countries and territories. The grants, for periods of two or three years, are expected to reach over 730,000 women and girls by 2018.

In 2014, grantees reached over 1 million women, girls, men and boys, including 90,000 women and girls survivors of violence; over 38,000 women and girls living with HIV/AIDS; and 4,385 women human rights defenders. Projects also reached over 22 million people through awareness-raising, social media campaigns, radio and television shows, theatre and other forms of edutainment.

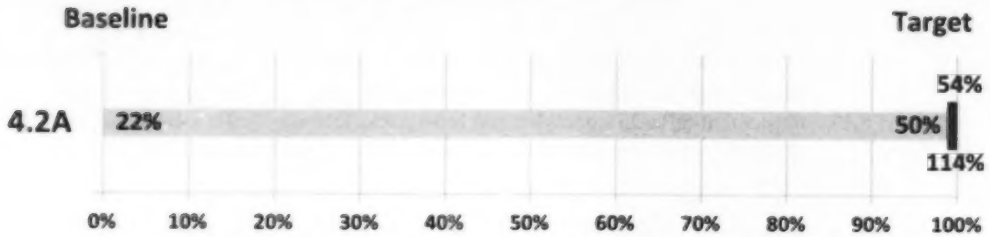
E. Women's increased leadership in peace and security and humanitarian response

33. Though women have led peace movements and driven community recovery after conflict, they are almost completely absent from peace negotiations and other formal peace and security decision-making forums. Exclusion from reconstruction limits their access to opportunities to recover, to gain justice for human rights abuses and to participate in shaping reformed laws and public institutions. In 2014, UN-Women worked on women's leadership in peace, security and humanitarian response in 66 countries and led the United Nations system on normative development and coordination at the global level. In 2014, the Entity saw progress across all of the outcome indicators in the strategic plan (see figure IV).

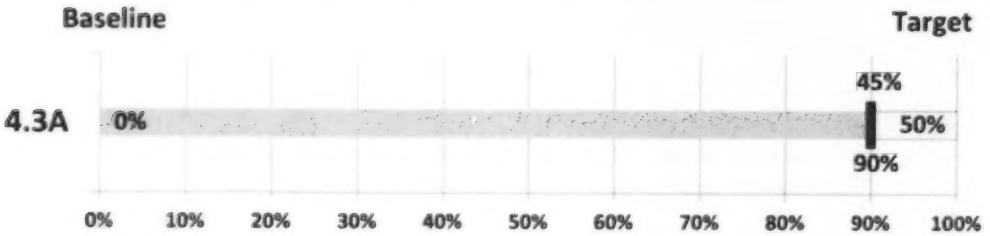
Figure IV
Progress on outcome indicators for impact area 4



4.1A: Number of countries implementing national action plans on women, peace and security or other relevant planning instruments



4.2A: Percentage of peace agreements supported by the United Nations with specific provisions to improve the security and status of women and girls



4.3A: Percentage of intergovernmental outcome documents on humanitarian action with specific provisions to strengthen targeted action for gender equality and women's empowerment in humanitarian action

34. In 2014, UN-Women worked in 23 countries to support women's leadership in preventing and mitigating armed conflict, participating in peace processes, consolidating peace and economic recovery in post-conflict settings, protecting women from violence, seeking justice for survivors and helping governments adopt or implement national policies or action plans on women, peace and security. UN-Women also supported 36 countries in adopting and implementing commitments and accountability frameworks regarding women, peace and security in conflict and post-conflict situations. UN-Women also deployed, jointly with intergovernmental partner Justice Rapid Response, 23 experts in investigation and documentation of gender-based crimes to support international investigations or prosecutions in 12 different countries, including a full investigative team for the African Union Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan, where almost half of all

investigators in the team had a mandate to focus on gender-based crimes. The information gathered by those experts has led directly to building cases against perpetrators of atrocities against women and girls.

35. Work on women's participation in ongoing peace talks included several breakthroughs. In South Sudan, three women negotiators were nominated by each faction in a national consultative process that led to the adoption of a common women's platform and agenda for peace. In Colombia, UN-Women continued to support the inclusion of gender equality in the peace process, supporting women's participation and voice in national and regional consultations about the peace talks, held in Havana, and facilitating the visit to the peace talks of several delegations of victims, ensuring that over 60 per cent were women.

36. In India, UN-Women partnered with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to train their police contingents for peace operations, including the all-female formed police unit that is deployed in Liberia, and was invited for the first time to train Sri Lankan military peacekeepers on addressing sexual violence. In Nigeria, Burundi and Guinea-Bissau, hundreds of women were trained and mobilized to monitor and report on the peaceful conduct of democratic elections. Thousands of women in Côte d'Ivoire were supported in carrying out economic activities in the areas of the country most affected by the armed conflict and this has had a noticeable impact on social cohesion and recovery, including on the gradual reintegration of returnees.

37. The Entity's humanitarian strategy was endorsed by the Executive Board in 2014 and UN-Women worked in more than 20 countries towards achieving the strategy's goal of ensuring the integration of considerations concerning gender equality and women's empowerment into the development and implementation of norms, policy and procedures in humanitarian action. At the global level, rapid surge capacity deployments of UN-Women gender advisers were undertaken to 10 crisis-affected countries in support of the joint efforts of the humanitarian system. UN-Women provided contributions in 40 countries to adopt and implement gender equality commitments in humanitarian action, including disaster risk reduction and preparedness, response and early recovery.

Ebola response

Since the declaration of the Ebola outbreak in West Africa as an international public health emergency, UN-Women has been facilitating mobilization and information efforts targeting women, who have been disproportionately affected by the disease, coordinating United Nations efforts to address gender perspectives within the response and supporting the collection of sex-disaggregated data. UN-Women led the development and implementation of United Nations gender equality strategies and worked with national partners to undertake gender needs assessments in Sierra Leone and Liberia, resulting in increased attention to women and girls affected by the disease. At the regional level, UN-Women engaged with the States members of the Mano River Union (Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Côte d'Ivoire) to harness women's leadership and social mobilization in containing the epidemic. Specific efforts and programmes in Liberia and Sierra Leone include: raising awareness; producing educational materials to train health-care workers; supporting survivors,

who are subjected to stigma, as well as orphaned children; ensuring that women's needs are reflected in the humanitarian response of the United Nations; and providing economic grants for hard-hit cross-border traders. UN-Women also formed part of the Ebola recovery assessment team in order to bring the voices of women and girls to the table, ensuring their needs and interests were reflected in the planning and implementation of recovery efforts.

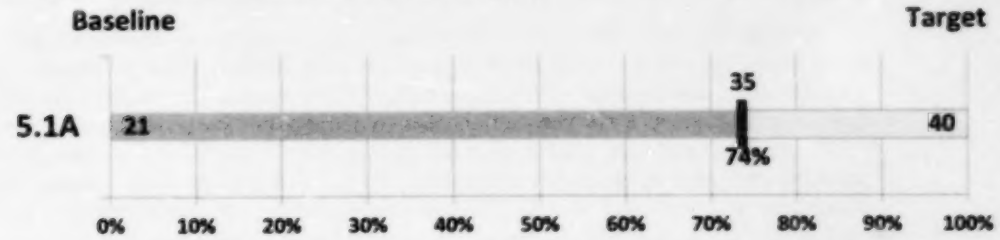
38. In Gaza, UN-Women supported partners to express the needs and priorities of women, girls, men and boys who were displaced as a result of the crisis in 2014, supporting humanitarian actors in mainstreaming gender perspectives in their response and working with the European Union, the World Bank and the United Nations system to include gender issues in the damage and needs assessment following the crisis.

39. Through its regional office in Senegal, UN-Women supported 2,000 women who had been subjected to atrocities and gender-based violence in the Central African Republic. A multisectoral approach was adopted and psychosocial support was accompanied by medical care, psychological support, economic empowerment and access to justice. UN-Women also trained 60 young health- and social care providers on addressing violence against women and girls, supporting psychological health and developing listening skills, as well as on how to help victims of violence overcome trauma, stress, stigma, suicidal thinking and refer them for medical and legal support, with respect and confidentiality.

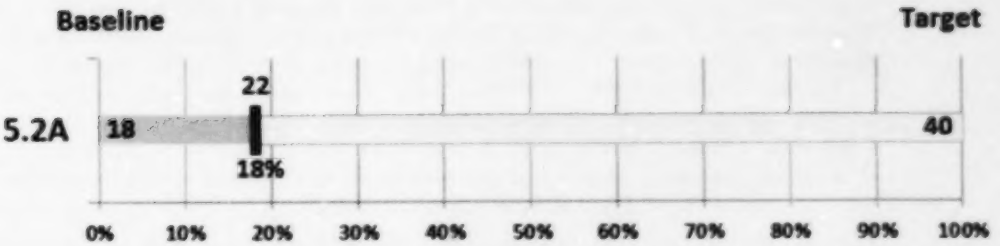
F. Strengthening the responsiveness of plans and budgets to gender equality

40. Commitments to support gender equality and women's empowerment are often not matched with adequate investment. Costing of national action plans for gender equality show financing deficits as high as 90 per cent, which limits the full implementation of commitments. UN-Women works to address the issue by developing capacity with knowledge and tools, supporting gender-responsive plans and budgets and supporting national dialogue thereon. In 2014, UN-Women worked in support of 73 countries to strengthen gender equality priorities in their national, sectoral and local development plans and budgets. In 2014, reporting at the country level indicates that UN-Women saw progress across all of the outcome indicators in the strategic plan, ranging from 18 per cent to 74 per cent (see figure V).

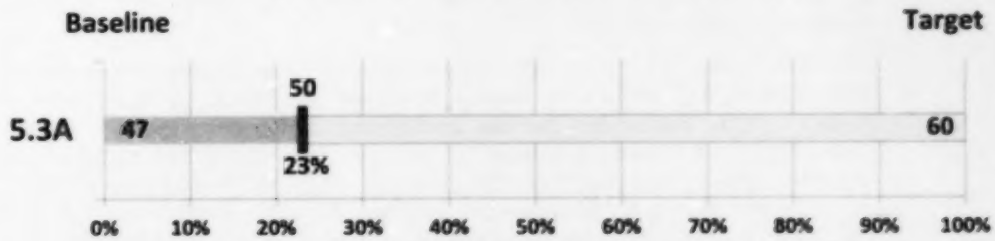
Figure V
Progress on outcome indicators for impact area 5



5.1A: Number of countries where national action plans on gender equality are developed and implemented in alignment with national development strategies



5.2A : Number of countries where systems are in place to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment



5.3A: Number of countries whose national strategic plans for HIV/AIDS incorporate gender-responsive actions with budgets for implementation

41. In 2014, UN-Women worked in support of governance and national planning systems in 73 countries to ensure that they fully reflect accountability for gender equality commitments. 22 countries reported progress in increasing budget allocations for gender equality. For example, in the Philippines, resources allocated to gender and development programmes and activities by government agencies increased from $1.311 billion (57 billion Philippine pesos) in 2013 to $3.30 billion (143.7 billion Philippine pesos) in 2014. The percentage of the budget allocated to gender and development as a share of total allocation by agencies increased from 4.18 per cent in 2013 to 8.94 per cent in 2014. In Jordan, the budget allocation for gender equality increased from $1.934 billion (1.371 billion Jordanian dinars) in

2013 to $2.15 billion (1.522 billion Jordanian dinars) in 2014.[5] Mexico increased the federal budget allocated to gender equality to approximately $1.679 billion in 2014, representing an increase of more than 157 per cent since 2008.

42. UN-Women continued to provide support in 20 countries to developing new action plans on gender equality and in implementing existing plans in alignment with national development strategies. In Haiti, UN-Women provided technical assistance to develop a six-year action plan to support the implementation of the newly adopted national gender equality policy (2014-2034). The Entity also provided technical assistance to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in developing an operational plan for 2014 to implement the national action plan for gender equality, which was developed as part of the national strategy for gender equality (2013-2020). Technical support to ministries of finance continued, resulting in 7 countries issuing guidelines for gender-responsive budgeting.

43. In 53 countries, UN-Women supported mechanisms to increase the accountability of national governments as regards gender equality and monitor the implementation of commitments. With UN-Women support, systems to track gender equality allocations were strengthened in 10 countries. In South Sudan, the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare developed a mandatory national gender tracking matrix to track public spending and resources for gender equality. In Cambodia, a system developed by the Ministry for Women's Affairs informally collects information on gender equality allocations from ministries through gender focal points and the Ministry of Economy and Finance.

44. At the global level, UN-Women continued engaging with the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, providing technical assistance and policy advocacy on the global indicator on gender equality adopted in the context of the Fourth High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, held in Busan, Republic of Korea, in 2011.

45. UN-Women continued to contribute to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) as a co-sponsoring agency, strengthening the inclusion of gender equality dimensions into the development of the new UNAIDS strategy (2016-2021). UN-Women supported 20 countries in adopting and implementing gender-responsive national HIV/AIDS strategies, plans and budgets and in almost 30 countries, the Entity facilitated the participation of representatives of women living with HIV in national decision-making processes, including the following: the development of midterm reviews of national strategic plans on HIV; the preparation of concept notes in relation to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; shadow reporting and monitoring of the implementation of concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women; and in drafting constitutions.

IV. Coordination

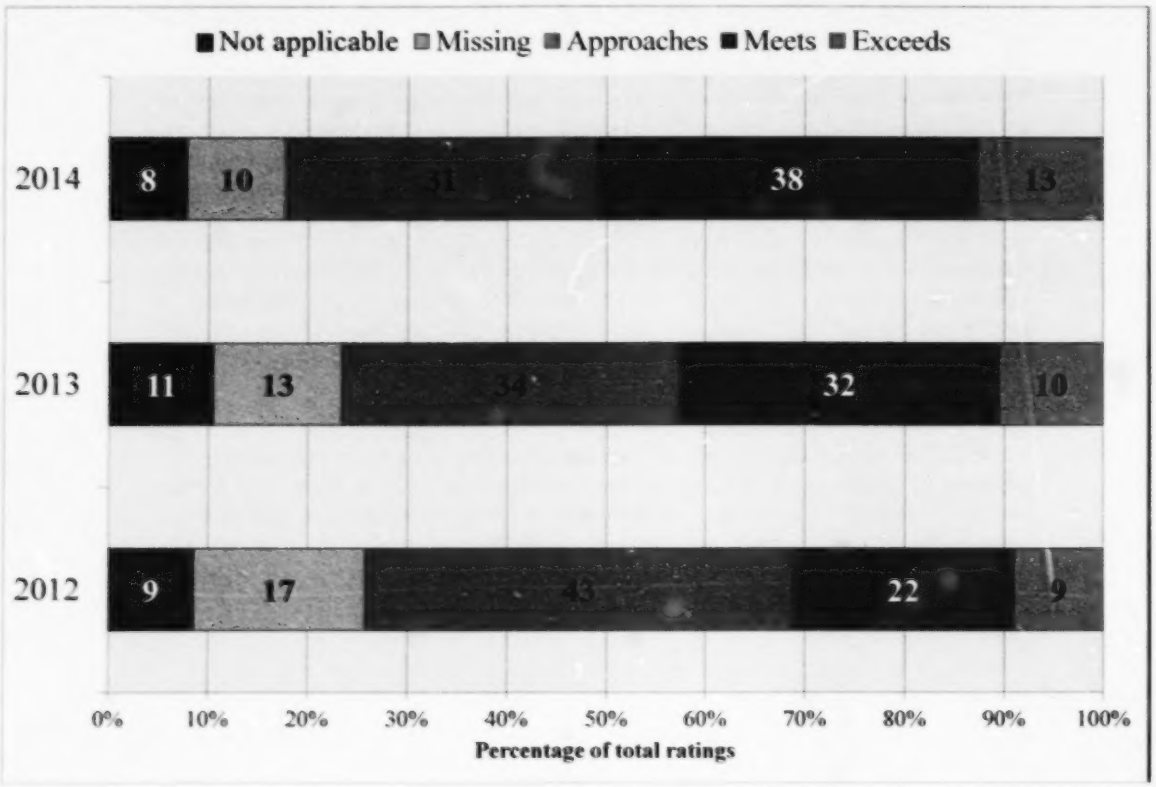
46. The Entity's work in coordination is guided by the principle that if the entire United Nations system brings its full collaborative advantage and coherent voice to make priorities of gender equality and the empowerment of women, then the system will more effectively contribute to concrete change for advancing these commitments

[5] Exchange rate as of 9 March 2015. 1 Philippine peso = $0.023 and 1 Jordanian dinar = $1.41.

at the community, country, regional and global levels. In 2014, UN-Women engaged inter-agency networks to promote coherence and contributed to the work of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and its three pillars, the United Nations Development Group, the High-level Committee on Programmes and the High-level Committee on Management to ensure that the United Nations is fit for purpose to deliver on gender equality in the post-2015 context. The Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality and the High-level Committee on Programmes were also mobilized for the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, leading to a joint statement by the Chief Executives Board to the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, committing United Nations principals to enhanced investment, results and accountability on gender equality (see CEB/2014/6, annex). UN-Women also supported the work of Member States in the Economic and Social Council and prepared the report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system (E/2014/63), which informed Council resolution 2014/2.

47. UN-Women continued driving progress towards accountability for gender equality and the empowerment of women across the United Nations system. In 2014, 62 entities and departments of the United Nations system reported progress in 14 of the 15 performance indicators of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. In addition, as can be seen from figure VI, across the system the percentage of indicators of the System-wide Action Plan rated as meeting or exceeding requirements was 51 per cent in 2014, an improvement from 31 per cent in 2012.

Figure VI
Comparative analysis of overall indicator ratings under the System-wide Action Plan across the United Nations system, 2012-2014



48. UN-Women investment across the United Nations system through guidance tools and the convening of 13 inter-agency workshops contributed to the effectiveness of the System-wide Action Plan. The Entity also monitored and reported on system-wide compliance with intergovernmental mandates on gender balance, including through the report of the Secretary-General on the improvement in the status of women in the United Nations system (A/69/346). In order to further enhance country-level accountability mechanisms, the United Nations Development Group launched a global review of gender scorecard implementation by United Nations country teams. The findings of the review will be used to upgrade the accountability mechanisms and align them more closely with the System-wide Action Plan.

49. UN-Women led the establishment of the gender experts roster of the United Nations Development Group, with 33 United Nations experts trained to support country teams in mainstreaming gender perspectives in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. With some 40 countries rolling out new Development Assistance Frameworks in 2015, providing advice and expertise to country teams and their partners will be a key part of the Entity's coordination role. UN-Women also led the development of the resource book of the United Nations

Development Group for mainstreaming gender in United Nations common programming at the country level.

50. UN-Women strengthened collaboration with United Nations entities in several areas, for example, through partnering with the World Health Organization to integrate the specific needs of women into the global health agenda. Collaboration with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) led to greater focus on the gender dimensions of rapid urbanization, including during the World Urban Forum in Colombia and in preparation for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), to be held in 2016. As a result of the work of UN-Women with the United Nations Environment Programme in the High-level Gender and Environment Forum, on the occasion of the first United Nations Environment Assembly, recommendations were made to promote gender-sensitive policies on the environment. UN-Women engaged with the Inter-Agency Support Group on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in order to promote the integration of gender perspectives into disability dialogues and policies.

51. UN-Women updated and circulated to all staff its strategy for implementing its inter-agency and system-wide mandates and will use the ongoing evaluation of its coordination mandate to enhance organizational learning and further refine its strategic approaches to engage the United Nations system on gender equality and the empowerment of women.

V. Organizational effectiveness and efficiency

A. Partnerships, communications, advocacy and cross-cutting approaches

52. The year 2014 represented a benchmark in terms of social mobilization and UN-Women brand-building, galvanizing people everywhere to join a global solidarity movement for gender equality and the empowerment of women. Through the Entity's three major advocacy campaigns, its outreach and media coverage set new records. The fifty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women was covered in the print media of 55 countries and the social media coverage had an audience of 47 million unique users, up from 28 million during the fifty-seventh session of the Commission.

53. With the participation of its Goodwill Ambassador, Emma Watson, UN-Women launched the "HeForShe" campaign as the global solidarity movement for gender equality, mobilizing men and boys as advocates and change agents, and the Secretary-General became the first to sign the commitment to support the campaign. Since then, more than 280,000 men and boys have committed themselves to taking action in support of gender equality and several Heads of State have become champions for the campaign. The campaign has also reached more than 1.2 billion people on social media.

54. The Secretary-General's campaign "UNiTE to End Violence against Women", which is managed by UN-Women, continued to mobilize governments, United Nations entities, civil society organizations and the public alike. The campaign issued a call to "Orange Your Neighbourhood" for the 16 days of activism against

gender-based violence. Landmarks, including the Empire State Building and the Secretariat building of the United Nations, both in New York, and the Pyramids of Giza, in Egypt, were illuminated with orange light to attract attention to the cause. Events took place in over 70 countries and the campaign reached over 100 million people through social media.

55. In the run-up to the twentieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, UN-Women launched a campaign, entitled "Empowering women, empowering humanity: picture it!", which focused on the 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action. The purpose of the campaign was to reignite debate around gender equality and women's empowerment, particularly among younger audiences. In order to increase media coverage of women's empowerment and in line with section J of the Beijing Platform for Action, on women and the media, UN-Women forged a media compact around the commemorations of the twentieth anniversary with some 30 leading media outlets around the globe.

56. Continued efforts to forge effective partnerships with civil society centred on strengthening gender equality actions in countries and encouraging governments to implement commitments in line with global standards. Catalytic funding for consultations with non-governmental organizations and for research significantly broadened the inputs and evidence to inform regional reviews in the context of the twentieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference and ensured strong civil society participation in discussions on accelerating progress towards gender equality. UN-Women also played a crucial role in ensuring the participation of civil society partners in various intergovernmental events in 2014, including at the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women. As part of the campaign for the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, UN-Women co-sponsored the second MenEngage Global Symposium, held in 2014, on the theme of "Men and Boys for Gender Justice", which focused on male responsibility for achieving gender equality.

B. Data and statistics

57. Working with partners, UN-Women continued to emphasize the importance of gender statistics. The Evidence and Data for Gender Equality Initiative, implemented by UN-Women, the Statistics Division and other partners, continued to compile gender indicators on health, education and employment. Working with the World Bank and the Bureau of Statistics of Uganda, a methodological tool on measuring asset ownership and entrepreneurship from a gender perspective was tested in order to contribute to the development of internationally accepted standards for such measurements. In 2014, the list of pilot countries was also finalized and countries will begin collecting data taken in 2015. UN-Women worked with the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics to improve the availability and collection of gender statistics globally and took part in the Group's eighth annual meeting and the fifth Global Forum on Gender Statistics, both of which took place in Mexico, in November 2014.

C. Capacity development and South-South cooperation

58. UN-Women recognizes capacity development and national ownership of gender equality and women's empowerment strategies as essential for the achievement of agreed results and adherence to commitments and norms. To that end, and in keeping with the guidance in General Assembly resolution 67/226 on strengthening operational and normative linkages for greater sustainability, UN-Women programmes continued to incorporate capacity development priorities and approaches, including through supporting effective national institutions, strategies and plans. The UN-Women Training Centre in the Dominican Republic is an important component of UN-Women work on capacity development. In 2014, the Centre launched the UN-Women eLearning Campus, to host training courses that are accessible worldwide and enhance knowledge and understanding on gender equality and women's empowerment. Since its launch, an eLearning Platform has secured more than 2,300 registered users and 7,565 visitors and during that time, the Centre has launched courses including the "I know gender" course, designed to support United Nations entities in meeting the requirements of the System-wide Action Plan.

59. In 2014, UN-Women offices supported more than 100 initiatives promoting South-South and triangular cooperation. In Africa, a Sharefair for rural women's technologies brought together more than 100 innovators on gender-sensitive agricultural and nutrition approaches, from 14 African countries, with a view to defining the scope for new policies that would scale up successful approaches. A group of women political leaders from Zimbabwe and representatives from Juba University, South Sudan, visited the Africa Centre for Transformative and Inclusive Leadership, established as a partnership between UN-Women and Kenyatta University in Kenya. In the Arab States region, the first Arab States Regional South-South Development Expo convened high-level representatives from various multilateral and bilateral institutions. UN-Women led one of the solution forums and, together with partners, presented potential actions for adaptation and scale-up. In Asia-Pacific, UN-Women, through a South-South regional exchange, explored problems faced by women in their political empowerment and highlighted positive experiences that have accelerated women's empowerment, such as the Women's Parliamentary Caucus in Pakistan, spaces available for women in Nepal's political process, and women's collective actions for their rights in Afghanistan, India and other countries of the region. In the Americas and the Caribbean, UN-Women supported the States members of the Caribbean Community in their collective review of the effectiveness of national women's machineries in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action, in the context of the twentieth anniversary review.

Information and communications technology and innovation

Information and communications technology for development is an expanding portfolio of work for UN-Women, encompassing global and national policies and strategies around gender equality and such technologies and their applications across UN-Women impact areas and issues around women's participation and leadership in the technology sector. In 2014, UN-Women positioned itself as a leader in this area of work through major partnerships and advocacy efforts. UN-Women led successful advocacy for strengthened language as concerns gender perspectives and regarding monitoring obligations and a role for

UN-Women as concerns commitments relating to gender equality in the outcome of the high-level event on the 10-year review of the World Summit on the Information Society coordinated by the International Telecommunication Union, in Geneva, from 10 to 13 June 2014. UN-Women also continued its advocacy as co-chair of the Broadband Commission Working Group on Broadband and Gender and as a new member of the Advisory Council of the Alliance for Affordable Internet, highlighting key issues to be addressed by policymakers and sharing good practices. With the International Telecommunication Union, the Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Technology Awards were launched and seven winners were announced in front of an audience of thousands of policymakers in the field of information and communications technology. On the application of technology for gender equality and women's empowerment, a partnership was established with the Data 2x partnership and Global Pulse to leverage big data for gender equality. Other key partnerships were established, for example with Intel, to increase women's digital literacy in three African countries, and with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, around mobile learning. A consultation with Silicon Valley companies was held and has resulted in partnerships with Facebook and UN-Women participation in internet.org as the key partner on gender equality content.

D. Results-based management, reporting and evaluation

60. In 2014 UN-Women began implementing ten steps for strengthening results-based management. The strategy identifies critical elements for strengthening staff capacity in results-based management and building a culture of effective programme management, focusing on the use of results-based management standards and the subsequent alignment of systems, functions and incentives behind them. During 2014, the standards were adopted and UN-Women began using them to assess the quality of plans and reports. Also in 2014, UN-Women launched phase 1 of a new results-based management system, containing all the results and indicators from field programmes. The emerging data will be used to develop programming notes to strengthen results and knowledge management. On the basis of indicator data gathered through the new system, it is apparent that there is a need to revisit some of the indicators in the strategic plan and this will be undertaken as part of the midterm review.

Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network

The 2014 assessment of UN-Women by the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network highlighted the Entity's strong mandate, ongoing relevance and success to date in building the organization. The assessment examined organizational effectiveness and development results, with a focus on strategic management, operational management, relationship management and knowledge management, as well as relevance of programme activities to the local context and evidence of progress towards results. Overall, UN-Women received a positive assessment, with most indicators rated strong or adequate. This is

particularly positive for a relatively new organization, which has achieved significant results in the overall context of limited resources and rapid change. The assessment found that the clear mandate of UN-Women for promoting gender equality is a key strength of the organization, that the mandate remains relevant and that, while more remains to be done, UN-Women has had considerable success in setting up its operational infrastructure.

61. In addition to the internal global evaluation oversight system that tracks key performance indicators of the evaluation function, in 2014 three external assessments of UN-Women were undertaken: a professional peer review of the UN-Women evaluation function, conducted by the United Nations Evaluation Group ; an analysis by the Joint Inspection Unit of the evaluation function in the United Nations system; and the assessment by the Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network of UN-Women. The Global Evaluation Advisory Committee took note of and agreed with findings consistent to all three external assessments that UN-Women has a strong central Evaluation Office, which performs well against evaluation standards of independence, credibility and utility.

62. In 2014, the independent Evaluation Office presented three corporate evaluation reports to the Executive Board: a corporate evaluation on peace and security and one on the joint evaluation by UN-Women, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP),the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Populating Fund and the UNDP-Spain Millennium Development Goals Achievement Fund of joint gender programmes, as well as the meta-analysis of 27 evaluations managed by UN-Women in 2013. All three reports demonstrated progress, highlighted areas for improvement and developed recommendations, which senior management took into consideration.

E. Mobilizing and leveraging adequate resources

63. Resource mobilization remained a major priority and challenge in 2014. Significant efforts were made to widen the partnership base, through increased support from a broad group of Member States and private sector partners. UN-Women core and non-core resources reached their highest level since the Entity's establishment ($164 million and $158 million, respectively), with a total income of $330 million. Over 140 Member States contributed to core resources. Six Member States now contribute amounts above $10 million, including Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, with Finland and the United Kingdom exceeding the $20 million mark. Twenty-six donors contributed to UN-Women for the first time, and 44 contributed as part of multi-year pledges. Total funding from new and existing private sector partners stands at $6.6 million, up from $5.6 million in 2013, and a Private Sector Leadership Advisory Council was established and is supporting UN-Women in its fundraising.

VI. Financial results: income and expenditure

64. The Board of Auditors issued its second unqualified audit opinion on the financial statements of UN-Women for the year ended 31 December 2013 (see A/69/5/Add.12), highlighting that financial statements and operations showed good financial health, with substantial current assets to meet the short-term maturing liabilities. The Board of Auditors recognized the major achievements, including institution-building and progress on organizational effectiveness and efficiency, but noted that UN-Women is prone to financial pressures in the case of a decline in voluntary funding levels.

65. UN-Women prepared the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2014 in accordance with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards. The figures provided in paragraphs 65 to 68 of the present report are unaudited and are subject to change prior to completion of the audit on 31 May 2015. There was a surplus for the year of $62.4 million (see table 1). The surplus is largely attributable to an increase in revenue during the year, under other resources, in an amount of $40.7 million. The increase was mainly received in the last quarter of the year, which left little time for spending in 2014, and the corresponding expenditure has been programmed for 2015.

66. The original revenue targets for 2014, included within the approved integrated budget for 2014-2015, were $160 million for regular resources and $150 million for other resources. Final revenue from voluntary contributions for 2014, including interest income, was $163.7 million in regular resources and $159.2 million in other resources, resulting in a total of $12.9 million in additional resources being received than budgeted. This is the first year since the establishment of UN-Women that budget targets have been fully met.

Table 1
Revenue and expenses as at 31 December 2014
(Thousands of United States dollars)

	2014				
	Regular resources	*Other resources*	*Assessed resources*	*Elimination*[a]	*Total*
Revenue					
Contributions	163 664	159 160	7 652	–	330 476
Investment income	686	906	–	–	1 592
Other revenue	161	10 952	–	(10 298)	815
Exchange revenue	30	(25)	–	–	5
Total	**164 541**	**170 993**	**7 652**	**(10 298)**	**332 888**
Expenses	**142 580**	**130 946**	**7 310**	**(10 298)**	**270 538**
Surplus for the year	**21 961**	**40 047**	**342**	**–**	**62 350**

[a] The elimination column represents indirect costs charged by UN-Women on programme funds received from donors in relation to the management of other resources. The indirect costs charged have been recognized during the year as an increase in support-cost income. At year end, that income is eliminated to show the actual revenue recognized.

Basis of the budget

67. Approved assessed contributions (regular budget) total $15.3 million for the biennium 2014-2015, with $7.7 million being allocated for 2014. Voluntary contributions (under regular and other resources) of $690 million for the biennium 2014-2015 ($310 million in 2014 and $380 million in 2015) were included within the integrated budget. Regular resources cover the institutional budget and core programme expenditures, with funds being allocated based on a set methodology.

68. The reported financial results (actual) are adjusted to allow comparison between the original approved institutional budget and assessed contributions as presented on a modified cash basis and the actual use of resources on an accrual basis (see table 2). The main changes between the IPSAS financial results and the results on a budget basis relate to difference in the treatment of the cost of assets and the treatment of cash advances to partners and staff members.

Table 2
Comparison of budget and actual use of resources as at 31 December 2014
(Thousands of United States dollars)

	Original budget	*Final budget*	*Actual amounts on comparable basis (restated)*	*Difference between final budget and actual amounts*
Regular budget activities	7 664	7 652	6 840	812
Development activities				
Programme	257 600	212 767	182 451	30 316
Development effectiveness	24 764	25 653	21 323	4 330
United Nations development coordination	13 340	13 154	10 435	2 719
Management activities	47 239	49 077	41 230	7 847
Change management	1 000	1 200	273	927
Total	**351 607**	**309 503**	**262 552**	**46 951**